NATION

We will rip you apart: SC threatens Patanjali

≫ Page: 4 ≪

BUSINESS

Sensex settles above 75,000 mark for first time

≫ Page: 7 ≪

SPORTS

1st leg of champions league QF

≫ Page: 8 ≪

www.twitter.com/EnglishSalar
www.facebook.com/EnglishSalar
www.instagram.com/dailysalarenglish
youtube.com/@dailysalardigital

SALAR
DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

سالار روزنامہ بنگلور

Website: salarnews.in www.magzter.com 11 APRIL 2024 |THURSDAY|BENGALURU| 1 SHAWWAL, 1445 AH Vol 4 | Issue No 83| Pages: 8

On the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr, our offices will remain closed on 11 April, 2024. Hence, there will be no edition of the Salar Digital English Daily dated 12 April, 2024. Salar News wishes its readers

Eid Mubarak

WE ARE HIRING

SUB-EDITOR
WEB EDITOR

Journalism degree preferred but not essential

Applicants with maximum 2 years of experience preferred. Freshers are encouraged to apply

SEND YOUR CV TO

asma@salar.news
anushreeirwin@gmail.com

CM lodges police plaint over fake news report, blames BJP & JD(S)

He accused BJP, JD(S) of fabricating disinformation to sway voters' opinion

BENGALURU, 10 APRIL

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Wednesday said he has lodged a police complaint over a fake news story and accused "the miscreants supported by the unholy alliance of BJP and JD(S) of fabricating a piece of disinformation mimicking a report from the Kannada newspaper."

Hours later, based on a complaint by Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee Legal Cell Secretary Harish Nagaraj, the Cyber Crime police station of Bengaluru West Division registered a case under Information Technology Act and Indian Penal Code.

> This fake news is loaded with content that stirs up communal tensions and has been widely disseminated across social media platforms
>
> -Siddaramaiah, Karnataka Chief Minister

"The police booked Prabhakar Reddy, Vasant Giliyar, Vijay Heragu, Pandu Modi Ka Parivar, BSY Supporters, Davangere BJP and Datri Goshale for posting the purported news report on X, Facebook and WhatsApp handles," official sources said.

Siddaramaiah earlier said he will root out the creators of such fake news and those backing them through legal means.

The Chief Minister shared the purported 'news report' in Kannada, whose headline read, "We don't need Hindus. Muslim votes are enough: Siddaramaiah," on the micro-blogging site 'X'.

Quoting Siddaramaiah, the sub-heading in the fake news report said: "I wish to be born as a Muslim in the next birth. Don't bother about BJP's comments on Muslim appeasement."

"This fake news is loaded with content that stirs up communal tensions and has been widely disseminated across social media platforms," Siddaramaiah said.

Stating that he has already lodged a complaint with the police about this, he said, "We have information about the vested interests behind this and the police will take necessary action."

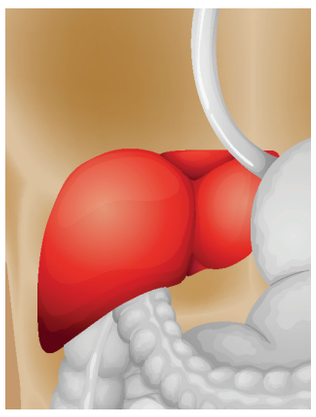
Resorting to such deceitful tactics to win elections, rather than engaging with political opponents through fair and honest means, shows the intellectual bankruptcy of the BJP and JD(S), the chief minister alleged.

"A party that has ruled the country for 10 years should not have stooped to such a despicable level of manufacturing fake news to win an election. Be cautious before believing and sharing fake news..!," Siddaramaiah added.

He accused BJP and JD(S) of fabricating misinformation to manipulate public opinion.

—Salar News with Agencies

INDIA 2ND TO CHINA IN HEPATITIS B & C CASES: WHO



GENEVA, 10 APRIL

India accounted for the second-highest number of cases of hepatitis B and C in 2022 after China, with 3.5 crore infections, according to a report by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Hepatitis is an inflammation of the liver that can cause a range of health problems and can be fatal.

According to the WHO's 2024 Global Hepatitis Report released on Tuesday, 254 million people lived with hepatitis B and 50 million with hepatitis C in 2022 globally.

India, which was second only to China in the viral hepatitis burden, registered 2.98 crore hepatitis B cases in 2022 while the number of hepatitis C infections stood at 55 lakh.

The report said that with a total of 3.5 crore cases, India accounted for 11.6 per cent of the total disease burden globally that year.

The WHO report said new data from 187 countries show that the estimated number of deaths from viral hepatitis increased from 1.1 million in 2019 to 1.3 million in 2022. Of these, 83 per cent were caused by hepatitis B, and 17 per cent by hepatitis C.

The report outlined a series of actions to advance a public health approach to viral hepatitis, designed to accelerate progress towards ending the epidemic by 2030.

—PTI

PREP FOR EID

Workers erect tents at Chamarajpet Idgah Maidan in Bengaluru on Wednesday in preparations for Eid-ul-Fitr prayers on Thursday morning **PHOTO: PTI**

K'taka HC overturns Centre's order banning 'dangerous dog' breeds

BENGALURU, 10 APRIL

Karnataka High Court on Wednesday overturned a directive issued by Centre regarding the ban on the import, breeding, and sale of specific breeds of dogs labelled as dangerous by an expert committee under Animal Husbandry Ministry.

13 March directive from the Animal Husbandry Ministry instructed states and Union Territories to refrain from granting licenses or permissions for activities involving breeds like Pitbull Terrier, Tosa Inu identified as potentially hazardous.

This decision by Centre was prompted by several incidents of fatal dog attacks leading to the classification of breeds such as Pitbull Terrier, Tosa Inu, American Staffordshire Terrier among others, as "dangerous." The ban encompassed a wide range of breeds, including those commonly referred to as Ban Dog or Bandog, Rottweilers and Terriers.

In its ruling, High Court stressed on the necessity of consulting with pet owners and relevant stakeholders before imposing such restrictions, thereby ensuring a fair and inclusive decision-making process. *—PTI*

B'luru: 3 killed as bike collides with transport vehicle

BENGALURU, 10 APRIL

Three youths on a bike were killed when they crashed into a mini transport vehicle at Rajagopalanagar in the City, on Wednesday. According to the police, the youths were heading to a nearby market to purchase clothes and other items for Eid celebrations on Tuesday night when the accident took place, killing them on the spot. The driver of the four-wheeler fled the place after leaving behind his vehicle. *—PTI*

IIM-Ahmedabad in world's top 25 for mgmt studies

NEW DELHI, 10 APRIL

IIM-Ahmedabad is among the top 25 institutions globally for business and management studies while IIM-Bangalore and IIM-Calcutta are among the top 50, according to the QS Wolrd University Rankings by Subject, announced on Wednesday. Jawaharlal Nehru University is the highest-ranked university in India in the coveted rankings announced by Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), the London-based higher education analytics firm. *—PTI*

Musk to visit India this month; to meet PM

NEW DELHI, 10 APRIL

American electric car maker Tesla CEO Elon Musk is visiting India later this month to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi and is likely to announce the company's investment plans in the country, according to sources. Musk, who has described as a 'natural progression' to provide Tesla electric vehicles in India, is likely to be accompanied by other company executives during the visit that is expected in the week of 22 April. *—PTI*

Kejri seeks early hearing in SC against arrest

NEW DELHI, 10 APRIL

Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud on Wednesday said he will look into Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's request for an early listing of his plea against a high court order upholding his arrest. He asked Kejriwal's lawyer to send an email.

Earlier in the day, Kejriwal moved Supreme Court against 9 April judgement of High Court.

In a massive blow to Kejriwal, Delhi High Court on Tuesday upheld his arrest in a money laundering case stemming from the alleged excise policy scam, saying Enforcement Directorate (ED) was left with "little option" after he skipped repeated summonses and refused to join the investigation. A single-judge bench of Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma also cited ED's claim that Kejriwal conspired and was actively involved in the use and concealment of the proceeds of crime to reject his petition against his arrest.

Arvind Kejriwal **PHOTO: PTI**

The High Court asserted that there was no contravention of legal provisions as ED had enough material in its possession to nail him. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

15 KILLED AS BUS FALLS INTO SOIL MINE PIT IN DURG

DURG, 10 APRIL

At least 15 people were killed and more than a dozen injured as the bus fell into a 'murum' soil mine pit in Chhattisgarh's Durg district on Tuesday night.

The accident took place around 8.30 pm near Khapri village under Kumhari police station limits when the victims, employees of a distillery company, were returning home after work, Durg Superintendent of Police Jitendra Shukla said.

The bus with more than 30 people onboard skidded off the road and plunged into the 40 feet deep 'murum' mine. Soon after being alerted, a police team reached the spot and launched rescue operation. *—PTI*

HC orders CBI probe into crime against women, land grabbing in Sandeshkhali

KOLKATA, 10 APRIL

The Calcutta High Court on Wednesday ordered a CBI investigation into allegations of crimes against women and land grabbing in West Bengal's Sandeshkhali, which had witnessed protests over the issues.

Stating that the investigation will be monitored by the court, a division bench presided by Chief Justice TS Sivagnanam directed CBI to file a comprehensive report on the alleged illegal conversion of agricultural land into water bodies for pisciculture after conducting a thorough inspection of revenue records and physical inspection of land alleged to have been converted.

The bench, also comprising Justice Hiranmay Bhattacharyya, directed that

PHOTO: PTI

the matter will be heard again on 2 May, the date on which CBI was asked to file a comprehensive report.

ED officials were attacked on 5 January by a mob when they went to Sandeshkhali to search the premises of now-suspended Trinamool Congress leader Shajahan Sheikh.

Noting that the petitioners had prayed for the constitution of an enquiry committee to be headed by a retired judge of the high court, the division bench said that it decided to order an investigation by CBI considering the nature of allegations.

Around 600 complaints in the form of affidavits, including those of alleged sexual atrocities, land grabbing and other crimes such as assault and destruction of property, had been submitted before the court by petitioner-lawyer Priyanka Tibrewal.

The bench asked the CBI to issue necessary direction to the state police as to how and in what matter protection to the victims and witnesses can be granted without insisting on the strict procedures stipulated in the 'witness protection scheme'. *—PTI*

81.15% PASS PERCENTAGE

Hubballi girl scores 598, tops PUC 2 exams

BENGALURU, 10 APRIL

The Karnataka Department of Pre-University Education (DPUE) declared the results of the 2nd Pre-University Certificate (PUC) examinations on Wednesday.

Vidya Lakshmi of Hubballi emerged as the overall topper, scoring a commendable 598 marks in the Science stream. The Arts stream saw a three-way tie for the top position, with Medha D, Vedant Jnyanuba Navi, and Kavitha BV all achieving 596 marks. Ganavi M from Tumakuru topped the Commerce stream with 597 marks.

A total of 6,81,079 students appeared for the examinations conducted from 1-22 March, 2024, across 1124 exam centres.

Students greet each other after the announcement of PU results in Bengaluru on Wednesday **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

Dakshina Kannada district maintained its position at the forefront with the highest district-wise pass percentage of 97.37%, followed closely by Udupi at 96.80%.

With an overall pass percentage of 81.15%, over 5.5 lakh students out of the 6.8 lakh who appeared for the exams were successful. This marks a jump of 6.48% from the 74.67% recorded in 2023. In 2022, it stood at 61.88%, and in 2020, it was 69.20%. Notably, 2021 saw a unique scenario due to the pandemic and alternative evaluation methods employed.

Students can access their results and the toppers' list on the official websites [karresults.nic.in] or [kseab.karnataka.gov.in]. *—Salar News*

2 including Indian-origin man shot dead in Canada

OTTAWA, 10 APRIL

Two people, including an Indian-origin man, were killed in a shooting in Canada's south Edmonton on Monday.

Indian-origin man has been identified as Buta Singh Gill, the owner of Edmonton-based Gill Built Homes.

In a press release, Edmonton police said that Southwest Branch patrol officers responded to the report of a shooting in the area of Cavanagh Boulevard Southwest and Cherniak Way Southwest. It said that the Edmonton Police Service (EPS) is investigating the death of two men in southwest Edmonton. Edmonton police said, "At approximately 12.00 pm on Monday,8 April2024, Southwest Branch patrol officers responded to the report of a shooting in the area of Cavanagh Boulevard SW and Cherniak Way SW."

"Upon police arrival three injured males were located. EMS responded and determined two males, a 49-year-old and a 57-year-old were deceased, and a 51-year-old male was seriously injured.

Mohinder Banga said, "He was such a nice person, and he would jump in to help people whenever they needed help and without looking for anything in return. That was his quality." He added, "Obviously, you can see all the people here, they're all well-wishers and the community is in shock right now." *—ANI*

Woman kills her children, surrenders to police

BENGALURU, 10 APRIL

A woman allegedly smothered her two children to death and gave herself up to the police at Jalahalli in the City. The police have arrested the mother and are questioning her. The accused Gangadevi, 28, allegedly called the police control room at 1 am on Thursday complaining of trouble in her house. A Hoysala vehicle rushed to her residence. However, police did not see any commotion but found the bodies of the two children lying on the bed. She claimed to killed her children Gowtham, 7, and Lakshmi, 9, who was allegedly a victim of sexual abuse. Gangadevi claimed to have smothered them to death with a pillow. Gangadevi, a native of Andhra Pradesh worked at a private marketing firm and her husband Naresh was working as a pourakarmika in Bengaluru. On 20 March, Gangadevi lodged a case against Naresh accusing him of sexually abusing their daughter. Jalahalli police had arrested him under the POCSO Act. He is in judicial custody and lodged in Parappana Agrahara Central Prison. *—Salar News*

65-year-old woman dies by suicide

KOLAR, 10 APRIL

A 65-year-old woman died by suicide at the SNR hospital washroom here on Tuesday evening. The deceased Rathnamma, a resident of Malur was supposed to undergo a CT scan examination last evening before which she resorted to the extreme step. She was suffering from abdominal pain and was admitted to the hospital on Monday evening. She was found hanging just before she was about to go for scanning. She was accompanied by her husband and relatives. According to them, she had no solid motive for suicide. Kolar police have registered a case and are further investigating. *—Salar News*

Pilgrim killed by wild elephant in Chamarajanagar

C'NAGAR, 10 APRIL

In an incident on Tuesday, a wild elephant tragically killed a devotee at the Male Mahadeshwara Hills pilgrimage site in Chamarajanagar district. The victim is identified as Lakshmi, 42, a resident of Hulegala village in Mandya. Forest officials reported that the group decided to proceed on foot after encountering a large number of devotees walking along the route. While the group was on their way to Halahalla, an elephant suddenly attacked. Though other devotees managed to escape, Lakshmi was unfortunately caught by the elephant and killed instantly. Authorities arrived at the scene, and conducted a post-mortem examination at the Male Mahadeshwara Primary Health Centre. Padma Male, Lakshmi's sister, filed a police complaint at Mahadeshwara Betta Police Station. Forest officials expressed their condolences to Lakshmi's family and confirmed the allocation of Rs 15 lakh as compensation for their loss. *—Salar News*

Wild elephant rescued from trench in Kodagu

MADIKERI, 10 APRIL

A wild elephant in Kodagu district was rescued by forest officials on Wednesday after it became trapped in a trench. The incident occurred in Keremule village in Kushalnagar taluk.Forest authorities identified the elephant as a male, approximately 15-16 years old. The animal reportedly fell into the trench bordering the Balugodu reserve forest on Tuesday night while searching for food and water. Kudekal Ganesh, a resident residing near the trench found out the trapped elephant on Wednesday and immediately alerted the Kushalnagar Range Forest Office. Forest officials arrived at the scene around 9 am to initiate the rescue operation. *—Salar News*

Election Commission raids HDK's farmhouse

Kumaraswamy slams Cong after EC stops farmhouse feast

The Election Commission officers at the farmhouse of HD Kumaraswamy in Bidadi on Wednesday *PHOTO: PTI*

BENGALURU, 7 APRIL

Election Commission officials conducted a surprise raid on former chief minister HD Kumaraswamy's farmhouse located at Ketaganahalli in Bidadi on Wednesday.

Reacting to the raid, Kumaraswamy criticised Congress, accusing them of abusing their authority by pressuring local officials to target him. He clarified that the farmhouse was merely hosting meals for the 120 workers employed there and denied any personal involvement in the event. The farmhouse was allegedly hosting a banquet for over 250 guests, raising suspicions of a potential violation of the model code of conduct for Lok Sabha polls.

The officials discovered elaborate arrangements, including a lavish spread featuring chicken, mutton, and biryani. Kumaraswamy asserted that akin to the KPCC office for Congress and the Keshav Krupa headquarters for BJP, his farmhouse serves as his political headquarters.

Meanwhile, the leader of the Opposition R Ashok questioned the necessity of seeking permission to host a private dinner at one's residence. The dinner was organised on the occasion of the Ugadi festival.

"It was not a feast for the general public but a get-together of his workers in Bidadi. The election officers 'raided' on a complaint by some Congress leaders," a JD(S) leader said. *—Salar News*

DKS pans HDK for taking BJP leaders to pontiff

BENGALURU, 10 APRIL

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Wednesday criticised JD(S) leader HD Kumaraswamy for taking along BJP leaders, who had allegedly brought down the previous Congress-JD(S) coalition government, to meet a pontiff of an influential mutt of the Vokkaliga community.

Nirmalanandanatha Swamiji is the head of the Adichunchanagiri mutt, which is revered by the Vokkaligas, to which both Shivakumar and Kumaraswamy belong.

Shivakumar asserted that JD(S) would lose in all four seats that it "claims" it is contesting in, including Bengaluru Rural from where its patriarch HD Deve Gowda's son-in-law and eminent cardiologist Dr CN Manjunath is being fielded on a BJP ticket.

Sharply reacting to Shivakumar's statements, Kumaraswamy said that he has never misused the math or Swamiji for the sake of politics. He also retorted that not only four seats, the BJP-JD(S) alliance will win all 28 Lok Sabha seats in the state.

Speaking to reporters here, he pointed out that Congress candidates had recently met the Swamiji at his suggestion, following which the JD(S) leader has now taken BJP candidates along with him.

Stating that the Swamiji should have questioned the BJP about bringing down the "Vokkaliga community chief minister" (Kumaraswamy in July 2019), Shivakumar said, "I'm not aware whether Swamiji has that much strength to question."

Shivakumar said that since the Congress has given tickets to eight Vokkaligas in the Lok Sabha polls, including two from the Reddy community, and because he himself is from the community and is serving as the state Congress president and deputy chief minister, its people will not vote for other parties. *—PTI*

Congress to back seer who vowed to take on Pralhad

BENGALURU, 10 APRIL

State Congress President DK Shivakumar on Wednesday did not rule out the possibility of the party backing a prominent seer who announced that he would take on Union Minister Pralhad Joshi from Dharwad in the Lok Sabha polls.

He said they are weighing options when asked about it.

Targeting Joshi, a Brahmin, Fakira Dingaleshwar Swami of Shirahatti Fakkireshwar Mutt had accused him of "suppressing" Veerashaiva-Lingayat and other communities, and also misusing and causing disrepute to the Lingayat 'maths' to stay in power.

The Veerashaiva-Lingayat seer, who had announced his decision to contest as an independent on Monday, had also accused Congress of neglecting Lingayats after coming to power, and not giving suitable positions to leaders of calibre from the community.

Shivakumar said that the party has already announced its candidate -- Vinod Asooti -- for the Dharwad seat and that he will speak to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah.

"Nothing indirect, if we want (to support the pontiff) we will do it directly, it's a different matter. We have finalised our party candidate.

DK Shivakumar *PHOTO: PTI*

- State Congress President DK Shivakumar on Wednesday did not rule out the possibility of the party backing a prominent seer who announced that he would take on Union Minister Pralhad Joshi from Dharwad in the Lok Sabha polls. He said they are weighing options when asked about it

If he (seer) had asked earlier, it would have been a different matter, now there is a proposal. We have given the ticket to Vinod of the Youth Congress and he is working," Shivakumar. *—Salar News*

Happily quitting electoral politics, no regrets, says Moily

BENGALURU, 10 APRIL

Senior Congress leader and former chief minister M Veerappa Moily said on Wednesday the party has given him everything and he has no regrets over quitting electoral politics.

The former Union minister was keen to contest from Chikkaballapur -- from where he had won in 2009 and 2014 Parliamentary polls but lost in 2019 -- in the coming Lok Sabha elections but was denied the ticket.

"It was a good pretext for me to retire (from electoral politics)." The 84-year-old said he readily agreed when the Central leadership of Congress -- pointing out that party leaders of similar age like M Mallikarjun Kharge and Sonia Gandhi are also not contesting this time -- told him to give up his claim.

M Veerappa Moily *PHOTO: PTI*

"I would have won in Chikkaballapur again this time, Moily said here a day after he announced retirement from electoral politics, noting that he had continued to nurture the constituency and it was difficult to cut off his relationships with the people of the segment".

He underlined that he was not disillusioned by the party's move to not field him, saying he always abided by the high command's decisions.

He recalled that he had won the Assembly elections for six terms consecutively and even though he belonged to a "very microscopic community" he was made minister and given key portfolios and went on to become chief minister.

Moily noted that under UPA II headed by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, he was made minister and got the opportunity to hold six portfolios.

During his political tenure, he had earlier also served as AICC in-charge of states like Assam, the then undivided Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Kerala, among others.

Moily said he would canvas for the party candidates in Chikkaballapur, Udupi-Chikkamagaluru and Dakshina Kannada Lok Sabha segments and wherever the party wants him to. *—PTI*

LOK SABHA POLLS

2 Gowda scions take families' battle for Hassan into third gen

HASSAN 10 APRIL

The four-decade-old political battle between two influential families will once again be in sharp focus in this Lok Sabha polls, with members of their third generation fighting it out in Hassan, which once hosted the capital of the Hoysala kingdom.

Known for its world-renowned Hoysala period architectural marvels and UNESCO world heritage sites like Belur, Halebedu, and also Jain sanctuary Shravanabelagola, Hassan, which lies partly in the 'malnad' tract and in the southern plains, gave the country its first Kannadiga Prime Minister -- HD Deve Gowda.

The latest in the duel involving Deve and his fierce opponent former minister late G Puttaswamy Gowda's families, will see their grandsons battling it out in the polls, in this Vokkaliga-dominated district.

Deve's grandson, the 33-year-old Prajwal Revanna, is seeking re-election from the seat as the joint candidate of BJP-JD(S) alliance, while Congress has named 31-year-old Shreyas M Patel, the grandson of Puttaswamy.

Prajwal is hopeful of asserting supremacy in his grandfather's home turf, staving off some amount of "anti incumbency", and riding on strength from the support of Vokkaliga vote base, coupled with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's popularity and BJP's support.

Prajwal as the joint candidate of Congress-JD(S) alliance won the seat in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls by 1,41,324 votes.

Patel, a former Hassan zilla panchayat member, who is said to have got the Congress' ticket based on his performance in Assembly polls, hopes for the momentum to continue in his favour, along with the State government's guarantee schemes that his party is banking on.

To placate BJP and RSS support base in the district, Prajwal has even apologised for his earlier remarks against RSS.

For Patel, the Vokkaliga subcaste factor may also work in his favour, as he may be able to consolidate the 'Dasa Vokkaliga' votes, which have a larger presence in the constituency, as he belongs to the community. *—PTI*

Actress Ramya to campaign in Mandya

MANDYA, 10 APRIL

The political landscape in Mandya is heating up with intense campaigning by candidates from both Congress and alliance parties. Popular Sandalwood actress Ramya is slated to join the campaign trail against HD Kumaraswamy.

Kumaraswamy is leaving no stone unturned in his campaign efforts to secure a majority in Lok Sabha elections. Venkata Ramegowda (Star Chandru), Congress candidate, is also poised to give a tough fight to his contender. Congress has devised a comprehensive strategy to bolster their candidate's campaign. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, and Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar are gearing up to make appearances in the Okkaliga stronghold. Siddaramaiah is slated to embark on a one-day canvassing tour, focusing on KR Nagar and KR Pete within the Mandya Lok Sabha. *—Salar News*

Ramya *PHOTO: PTI*

SC/ST COMMISSION ISSUES NOTICE TO 15 POLICE PERSONNEL

KOPPAL, 10 APRIL

State Scheduled Castes/ Scheduled Tribes (SC/ST) Commission has initiated an inquiry on 15 police personnel acting on a complaint filed by social worker Chandrappa Nayaka, accusing them of exerting influence and engaging in illegal activities. This includes the fabrication of false cases also. According to the complainant, the officers stationed across Gangavati Nagar, Gangavati Rural, Kanakagiri, and in traffic police stations have remained in their positions for the last two decades without any transfer, raising concerns of potential misuse of power. *—Salar News*

Modi to address rally in Mysuru on 14 April

BENGALURU, 10 APRIL

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be visiting Mysuru and Mangaluru in Karnataka to campaign for Lok Sabha polls on 14 April, a State party leader said.

Modi had held mega rallies in Kalaburagi and Shivamogga last month. BJP General Secretary V Sunil Kumar said the Prime Minister would address a mega rally in Mysuru and hold a roadshow in Mangaluru.

Speaking about Modi's itinerary on 14 April, the State's convenor for party's Lok Sabha Election Management Committee said that Modi will be addressing a public meeting at 4 pm that day, in which party workers from Mysuru, Chamarajanagar, Mandya and Hassan Lok Sabha constituencies will gather at Mysuru's Maharaja College grounds.

Speaking to reporters here, Kumar said both the leaders of BJP and JD(S) will take part along with the Prime Minister. *—PTI*

Narendra Modi *PHOTO: PTI*

VILLAGERS IN KOLAR THREATEN TO BOYCOTT LS POLLS

KOLAR, 10 APRIL

In protest against the decision to shift the polling station, the Krishnapura villagers in Kolar taluk with over 350 voters have decided to boycott the upcoming Lok Sabha polls. It is decided that the polling station will be shifted to nearby Ammanalluru village which is about two kilometres from their village. The villagers have submitted a petition to the Deputy Commissioner (DC) seeking restoration of the polling station. The DC has assured them necessary steps will be taken to provide facilities to enable them to exercise their franchise in the newly polling station. *—Salar News*

'HE WAS DRUNK'

BMRCL junks report of man being denied entry

BENGALURU, 10 APRIL

The Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) has entangled itself in another controversy after a social media post alleged a labourer was denied entry for having his top two shirt buttons unbuttoned.

BMRCL chief Public Relations Officer Yashwanth Chavan told **Salar News,** "The metro does not discriminate against passengers based on their socioeconomic status or appearance." Chavan clarified that the man was stopped due to suspicion of intoxication, fearing disruption to other passengers. "Security personnel stopped the individual due to suspicion of intoxication, which could potentially disrupt the safety and comfort of other passengers. After his assurance that he would not disturb others, the youth was allowed to travel." Chavan said.

Earlier, a Metro passenger claimed that a labourer was stopped at the Metro station because of the way he was dressed.

"Location Doddakallasandra metro. One more incident of cloth/attire related incident happened in front of me just now. A labourer was stopped and told to stitch up his top two buttons... When did Namma metro became like this!!?" the passenger said in a post on X. *—Salar News Agency*

BMRCL clarified that the man was stopped due to suspicion of intoxication, fearing disruption to other passengers *PHOTO: SCREENGRAB*

- BMRCL chief Public Relations Officer Yashwanth Chavan told Salar News "The metro does not discriminate against passengers based on their socio-economic status or appearance." Chavan clarified that the man was stopped due to suspicion of intoxication

PETA gifts robotic elephant to JSS Mutt

MYSURU, 10 APRIL

In a unique gesture aimed at advocating for the welfare of elephants, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals India has presented a lifelike robotic elephant to the JSS Mutt. Crafted by the skilled hands of Kerala artist Prashanth, this 10-foot-tall mechanical marvel serves a noble purpose: to safeguard elephants from harm and violence during temple festivals.

This remarkable creation, which closely resembles a live elephant, comes as a boon to temple authorities grappling with the challenge of ensuring the well-being of these majestic creatures. The robotic elephant mimics the natural movements of its living counterparts—it flaps its ears, blinks, shakes its neck, raises its trunk, and even sprinkles water, captivating the onlookers with its lifelike charm.

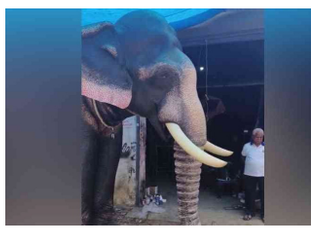


PHOTO: SALAR

Installed within a mantapa adorned in the traditional Jambusawari pattern, this electric marvel named Shiva stands as a testament to innovation and compassion.

According to GL Tripuranthaka, coordinator of the JSS organisation at Suttur Math, the artificial elephant will play a central role in all religious and celebratory events hosted by the Math. *—Salar News*

PHOTO: PTI

Maha Cong chief Patole unhurt after accident

MUMBAI, 10 APRIL

Maharashtra Congress president Nana Patole on Wednesday said he escaped unhurt after a truck hit his car in Bhandara district of the state, with his party alleging that it was an attempt on his life.

The incident took place on Tuesday night, Patole said, adding that the police were trying to find if it was sabotage. In a video message, Patole said, "Yesterday, a truck tried to hit our car intentionally near Bhandara. We were unhurt, but the vehicle got damaged badly. I am safe due to the blessings of people. We have filed a police complaint and the police will find out whether it is sabotage or something else." State Congress spokesperson Atul Londhe said Patole was on election campaigning in Bhandara district, when a truck hit his vehicle. *—PTI*

History doesn't change by spewing lies: RaGa to Oppn

PATNA, 10 APRIL

Amid BJP's repeated 'Muslim League imprint' barb over Congress manifesto, Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday said history is witness as to who joined hands with the forces that wanted to divide the country and asserted that history does not change by "spewing lies" from political platforms. Gandhi said that the 2024 Lok Sabha polls are a fight between two ideologies, with the Congress, which has always united India, on one side and those who have always tried to divide people on the other side. Gandhi said. Gandhi's remarks come amid repeated attacks by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, saying that the Congress manifesto bears a 'Muslim League imprint'.Congress has moved Election Commission against his remarks. *—PTI*

BJP office-bearer among 2 killed in MP car accident

GUNA, 10 APRIL

A local office-bearer of BJP and one more were killed after they were hit by a car being driven by a trainee pilot in Madhya Pradesh's Guna district, police said on Wednesday. The incident, which also left one person injured, occurred on the main road near New City Colony under Kotwali police station limits around 11.30pm on Tuesday, and the deceased was identified as the district BJP secretary Anand Raghuvanshi (Magrana) and Kamlesh Yadav, husband of Mohanpur village sarpanch, an official said. Following the incident, Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia cancelled all his political engagements in the Guna Lok Sabha constituency, from where he is contesting the upcoming election as a BJP candidate.*—PTI*

Fortune tellers held for predicting party's win

CUDDALORE, 10 APRIL

Two roadside astrologers who predicted Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK) candidate's victory in the 19 April Lok Sabha election with the help of their parakeet were arrested on a charge of keeping parakeets caged but was later released. During a consultation by film director-politician Thankar Bachan, PMK candidate for Cuddalore constituency, the astrologers, who are brothers, had used one of their four parakeets to pick a card and read out the prediction that Bachan would win in the election. During his election campaign, Bachan visited the Azhagu Muthu Ayyanar temple at Thennampakkam near Cuddalore and sought the astrologers' service to know about his electoral fortunes. The fortune teller interpreted the deity on the card it as a sign and said Bachan would win. *—PTI*

Delhi min quits AAP over 'corruption'

He says he is unable to work in AAP-led govt

NEW DELHI, 10 APRIL

Delhi minister Raaj Kumar Anand on Wednesday resigned from the cabinet and quit Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) alleging Dalits were not given representation in the party.

Addressing a press conference here, Anand, who was holding various portfolios including Social Welfare, alleged that there was no Dalit among the top leaders of AAP.

"This party doesn't respect Dalit MLAs, councillors and ministers. In such circumstances, all Dalits feel cheated. We live in an inclusive society, but it is not wrong to talk about proportion. It is difficult for me to remain in the party with all these things, hence I am resigning from the post," Anand said.

He also took a swipe at Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal who is in Tihar jail after being remanded in judicial custody in an excise policy-linked money laundering case and has failed to get any relief from the Delhi High Court.

Raaj Kumar Anand PHOTO: PTI

"From the Jantar Mantar, Kejriwal had said that the country will change once politics changes.

The politics hasn't changed but the politician has changed," Anand, who is an MLA from the Patel Nagar constituency, said.

In response to a query on the timing of his resignation, Anand said, "It is not about timing. Till yesterday, we were under the impression that we are being framed, but after the High Court verdict, it seems that there is something wrong at our end."

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday upheld Kejriwal's arrest and subsequent remand, saying the Enforcement Directorate (ED) was left with "little option" after he skipped repeated summonses and refused to join the investigation.

It also cited the ED's claim that Kejriwal conspired and was actively involved in use and concealment of the proceeds of crime to reject his petition against his arrest.

—PTI

Rajeev Chandrasekhar, Shashi Tharoor PHOTO: PTI

Chandrasekhar sues Tharoor for defamation

T'PURAM, 10 APRIL

Union Minister of State for Information Technology and Electronics Rajeev Chandrasekhar has sent a legal notice to Congress MP Shashi Tharoor accusing him of making defamatory statements against BJP leader on a TV channel recently.

Chandrasekhar, who is facing off against Tharoor in the Thiruvananthapuram Lok Sabha constituency in the upcoming polls on 26 April, has alleged that Congress MP disseminated "patently false information" regarding bribing of key voters and influential figures such as parish priests, among others, by BJP leader.

The notice has claimed that the statements by Tharoor were made with an intent to harm Chandrasekhar's reputation and image and that his remarks also disrespected the entire Christian community of Thiruvananthapuram and its leaders by accusing them of engaging in cash-for-votes activities.

It has also contended that the Congress MP's statements were in violation of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC).

The legal notice to Congress leader has sought that he "immediately withdraw" all the allegations made against Chandrashekhar on 6 April, tender an unconditional public apology to him on print and electronic media and "cease, refrain and desist from defaming, harassing, hampering the reputation" of the minister in the future.

It has warned that failure to comply with the stated conditions within 24 hours of receipt of the notice would lead to initiation of appropriate criminal and civil proceedings in a competent court of law. *—PTI*

CONG MP FILES PLAINT AGAINST ASSAM CM

GUWAHATI, 10 APRIL

BCongress MP and Lok Sabha poll candidate from Nagaon constituency in Assam, Pradyut Bordoloi, has filed a complaint against Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, alleging that he violated the model code of conduct by offering money to all ration cardholders during the ongoing election campaign.

Bordoloi alleged that Sarma, in a public meeting in Lakhimpur during the day, made a promise to transfer Rs 10,000 to the bank accounts of every ration cardholder after the election., "Such promises are not only unethical but also an attempt to influence voters through inducements, thereby compromising the integrity of the electoral process".*—PTI*

BJP trolls Tejashwi for eating fish during Navratri

PATNA, 10 APRIL

Former Bihar deputy chief minister Tejashwi Prasad on Wednesday faced backlash on social media after sharing a video of himself eating fish in a helicopter during Navratri. The video, shared by Prasad on 9 April, the first day of Navratri, showed him dining with Mukesh Sahni, chief of the Vikassheel Insaan Party (VIP), while flying in a helicopter.

In the clip, both are seen enjoying food with Prasad explaining that he eats quickly during election campaigns. BJP criticised Prasad for what they called "politics of appeasement," labeling him a "seasonal Sanatani." *—PTI*

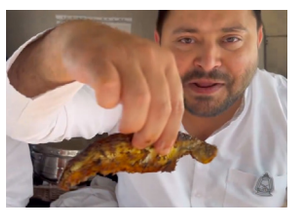


PHOTO: X/ @YADAVTEJASHWI

'POLITICAL THICKET'

Not James Bond film: HC junks pleas seeking Kejri's ouster

NEW DELHI, 10 APRIL

Delhi High Court on Wednesday expressed its displeasure over repeated filing of petitions seeking the removal of AAP Convener Arvind Kejriwal from the post of the Chief Minister after his arrest.

"This is not like a James Bond movie where we will have sequels. (Lt) Governor will take a call on this. You are trying to involve us in a political thicket, that's all," remarked the court.

A bench headed by Acting Chief Justice Manmohan pulled up petitioner Sandeep Kumar, a former AAP MLA who sought the removal of Kerjiwal from the office, for trying to involve the court in a "political thicket" and said it will impose costs of Rs 50,000 on him.

The bench, also comprising Justice Manmeet PS Arora, reiterated that it cannot impose governor's rule in the capital.

On 28 March, the court had dismissed a PIL for Kejriwal's removal, saying that while the petitioner had failed to show any legal bar that prohibited the arrested Chief Minister from holding office, there was also no scope for judicial interference in such cases. On 4 April, the court had refused to entertain a second PIL on the issue and said it was Kejriwal's personal choice to continue as the chief minister and granted liberty to the petitioner to approach the lieutenant governor (LG).

Kejriwal was arrested by the ED on 21 March, hours after the high court refused to grant him protection from coercive action by the federal anti-money laundering agency.

—PTI

PHOTO: PTI

Kejriwal provided copy of jail manual

NEW DELHI, 10 APRIL

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, who is lodged in Tihar jail in connection with a laundering case, was provided a copy of the prison manual after he asked for it, sources said on Wednesday.

Confirming this, a Tihar jail official said an inmate can read any book available in the prison library.

Kejriwal has been lodged in Tihar's jail number 2 since 1 April after he was sent to judicial custody for 14 days by the court.

After he was sent to jail, Kejriwal had asked the prison authorities for three books -- Ramayana, Mahabharata, and "How Prime Ministers Decide".

On Tuesday, Delhi High Court dismissed his plea challenging his arrest by Enforcement Directorate (ED) in the money laundering case linked to the now-scrapped Delhi excise policy, saying there was no contravention of legal provisions.

Kejriwal has been provided a TV with 20 channels in his cell but is not fond of it. He spends most of his time reading and doing meditation and yoga, an official source said.

With two CCTV cameras installed in Kejriwal's cell, the jail officials can keep a watch on him around the clock. A small space outside his cell, called a lobby, is where he can stretch and walk, according to sources. *—PTI*

- Kejriwal has been provided a TV with 20 channels in his cell but is not fond of it. He spends most of his time reading and doing meditation and yoga, an official source said

AAP supporters go on fast worldwide to back Kejriwal

WASHINGTON, 10 APRIL

Members and supporters of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) globally have observed a day of protest and fasting in solidarity with party chief and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, who was arrested by Enforcement Directorate in an alleged money laundering case. Kejriwal is currently lodged in Delhi's Tihar jail. AAP volunteers in the US, Canada, the United Kingdom, Ireland, and Australia gathered in front of Indian embassies and popular locations on Monday to protest Kejriwal's arrest and call for his immediate release, a media release said. AAP volunteers in Washington DC held a vigil in front of the Indian Embassy, while AAP members and supporters in New York, Boston, San Francisco, Dallas, Los Angeles, Toronto, Vancouver, London, Dublin, Berlin, Oslo and Melbourne among others organised a day-long hunger strike in prominent locations to bring attention to the threat to democracy and plight of Opposition leaders in India. *—PTI*

DMK synonymous with corruption, says Modi

VELLORE/METTUPALAYAM, 10 APRIL

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday launched a stinging attack on the ruling DMK in Tamil Nadu, accusing it of indulging in "hate and divisive politics," being synonymous with corruption and having no concern for the state's development.

Addressing election rallies in the state's Vellore and Mettupalayam, he also strongly criticised Congress, calling the national party and DMK, family parties.

The Dravidian party had the "first copyright" on corruption and the "family" was intent on looting the state, he said in an apparent reference to the party's first family, headed by its president and Chief Minister MK Stalin.

He further charged the DMK with being "a family company" that was impeding the progress of the state's youth with its "old mindset."

He alleged that while the country was progressing with 'Make in India' initiative, the DMK stands with those who want to end investments in the country.Modi charged Congress with playing "the dangerous game of discrimination and division, which DMK does in Tamil Nadu."

Narendra Modi PHOTO: PTI

For instance, he claimed that though the Centre ensured piped drinking water supply to crores of houses, in Tamil Nadu, the ruling DMK prioritised it for party workers/voters.Modi also alleged that the DMK and INDIA bloc constituents were doing nothing other than appeasement. Further escalating his attack on the DMK, he said it was the "other name of corruption and scam."

Targetting the Congress over its "prince Rahul Gandhi's" Shakti remarks, Modi claimed that the former spoke of "destroying Shakti of Hindu faith."

—PTI

PM in TN same as arrival of migratory bird: Stalin

CHENNAI, 10 APRIL

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on Wednesday took strong exception to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's campaign in the state and likened the latter's visits to a migratory bird arriving at the sanctuary during season and posed him questions on a series of issues.

The Prime Minister has come to the state with a set of guarantees for the 2024 general elections as his Gujarat model and Chaukidar role has been exposed, he said.

"Prime Minister Modi himself hovers over Tamil Nadu during the election season just like migratory birds come to the sanctuary during the season. ... will you give these guarantees?" Stalin, who is president of the ruling DMK, asked in a post on the social media platform X.

He sought to know from Modi, if he could guarantee conducting caste-wise census, remove the ceiling on reservation, strictly implement reservation for SC, ST and OBC, exempt Tamil Nadu from National Eligibility-cum-entrance test (NEET), never to impose Hindi and Sanskrit, and transferring education to state list.

MK Stalin PHOTO: PTI

Also, the Chief Minister wanted to know if the Prime Minister would write off the education loans of students, ensure jobs for two crore youth per year, Rs 400 grant under Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, fixing minimum support price for agricultural produce.

"Also, will you say that you will not treat minorities as second class citizens? Are you ready to give guarantee on all these?" Stalin asked.

"Otherwise your guarantees would be exposed as 'Made in BJP' washing machine that saffronises the tainted," Stalin added. *—PTI*

VOWS TO SCRAP AGNIPATH

SP manifesto promises caste census

LUCKNOW, 10 APRIL

Samajwadi Party (SP) President Akhilesh Yadav on Wednesday unveiled the party's manifesto for the Lok Sabha elections, promising a caste-based census by 2025, a legal guarantee for MSP, and scrapping of the Agnipath scheme.

The manifesto -- 'Janta Ka Maang Patra - Humara Adhikar' -- was released at the SP headquarters here in the presence of senior party leaders. Addressing a press conference here, Yadav said a caste-wise census would be conducted after the formation of the INDIA bloc government at the Centre to fill all the vacant government posts of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes by 2025.

He said the Agnipath military recruitment scheme would be scrapped and regular recruitment in the armed forces would be introduced.

Samajwadi Party President Akhilesh Yadav releases party's manifesto for Lok Sabha elections, in Lucknow on Wednesday PHOTO: PTI

It includes giving a legal guarantee of Minimum Support Price to the farmers, waiving off agricultural loans of farmers, providing free irrigation facilities, and formation of a Farmers' Commission. A promise has been made to provide a pension of Rs 5,000 per month to all landless small and marginal farmers.

—PTI

Kirron Kher, Sanjay Tandon PHOTO: FB/ X@ SANJAY TANDON

Sanjay Tandon replaces Kirron Kher in C'garh seat

CHANDIGARH, 10 APRIL

BJP on Wednesday announced Sanjay Tandon as its candidate for the lone Lok Sabha seat of Chandigarh, replacing two-time MP Kirron Kher.

Tandon, 60, is the party's co-incharge for Himachal Pradesh and is the son of former Chhattisgarh governor late Balramji Das Tandon who was one of the founding members of the Jan Sangh and later also served as Punjab BJP chief.

He thanked the party leadership for giving him the ticket from Chandigarh, which will go to polls in the last phase of general elections on 1 June, and discounted the electoral challenge posed by the INDIA bloc, saying "Politics works on chemistry, not on mathematics".

Actor Kirron Kher, who became MP from Chandigarh in 2014 and again won from the constituency in 2019, greeted Tandon on his nomination. *—PTI*

IN BIHAR, LALU'S 2 DAUGHTERS AMONG 22 RJD CANDIDATES

PATNA, 10 APRIL

Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) has formally announced its candidates for all but one of the 23 Lok Sabha seats in Bihar. Party president Lalu Prasad's daughters - Rohini Acharya and Misa Bharti - are among the RJD nominees.

According to a release issued by RJD state president Jagdanand Singh late on Tuesday, Acharya will contest from Saran, a seat her father had won many times.

Prasad represented the seat until his disqualification in 2013 when he was convicted in a fodder scam.

Bharti, his eldest daughter who is enjoying her second term in the Rajya Sabha, will try her luck in the Patliputra Lok Sabha constituency. *—PTI*

PHOTO:PIXABAY

Missing girl's body found stuffed in plastic bag in UP

RAMPUR, 10 APRIL

The mutilated body of a 3-year-old missing girl was found on Wednesday, stuffed inside a polythene bag at a vacant plot in Bilaspur here, police said. The victim, Anaija, allegedly went missing on 7 April after she went to buy candies from a shop in her village, Superintendent of Police Rajesh Dwivedi said. The family searched for the toddler but could not find her. Danish, the victim's father, filed a missing report last week at the Bilaspur police station, the SP said. The police received a call on Wednesday for the body of a girl found in a vacant plot located near the victim's home. The team immediately rushed to the spot and found the girl's body stuffed in a plastic bag, dumped over a pile of garbage, he said. *—PTI*

'3 who killed Pune student were debt-ridden'

PUNE, 10 APRIL

Three people who allegedly killed a woman engineering student from Pune last month and demanded Rs 9 lakh ransom from her family were debt-ridden and wanted to earn quick money, which prompted them to commit the crime, police said. On 30 March, engineering student Bhagyashri Sude,22, was allegedly kidnapped by Shivam Fulawale, her college friend, Suresh Indure and Sagar Jadhav from Viman Nagar area in Maharashtra's Pune city, they said. "During the investigation, it has come to light that accused wanted to earn some quick money the official said.*—PTI*

Temple fire: 79-yr-old 'sevak' succumbs to injuries

INDORE, 10 APRIL

A 79-year-old 'sevak', who was among the 14 people injured in a fire at the famous Mahakaleshwar temple in Madhya Pradesh's Ujjain last month, died during treatment at a hospital in Maharashtra on Wednesday. The fire broke out in the temple's sanctum sanctorum on 25 March during the famous 'bhasma aarti' ritual as 'gulal' (coloured powder fell) on the puja thali that contained burning camphor. "Satyanarayan Soni, sevadar at Mahakaleshwar temple, was first sent to a private hospital in Indore and when his condition did not improve, he was admitted to the National Burns Centre in Mumbai," Ujjain District Collector Neeraj Kumar Singh said. The collector said three people who suffered burns in the fire are currently admitted to Sri Aurobindo Institute of Medical Sciences in Indore, while the other injured persons have recovered after treatment. *—PTI*

Bodies of 5 people drowned in biogas pit recovered

PUNE, 10 APRIL

The bodies of five people, who drowned in an animal waste slurry collected in a pit in Maharashtra's Ahmednagar district, have been recovered hours after the incident, officials said on Wednesday. The incident took place at Wakdi village in Nevasa tehsil on Tuesday evening, and the bodies of the five deceased people were fished out post-midnight by the authorities, they said. "We have recovered the bodies of the victims from the animal waste slurry in the biogas pit. The bodies were taken out by 12.30 am on Wednesday and sent to a government hospital for post-mortem," Nevasa police station's inspector Dhananjay Jadhav said. A cat had fallen into the pit, and one person climbed down to rescue it but got stuck in the sludge inside, he said. While five people died in the incident, one was rescued and is currently undergoing treatment he added. *—PTI*

We will rip you apart: SC threatens Patanjali

SC refused to accept Ramdev's apology for 'misleading' ads

NEW DELHI, 10 APRIL

Supreme Court on Wednesday refused to accept the affidavits filed by yoga guru Ramdev and Managing Director of Patanjali Ayurved Balkrishna tendering unconditional apologies over publishing "misleading" advertisements, asserting they did so when "caught on the wrong foot".

The court also came down hard on the State Licensing Authority for its inaction on the issue and said it is not going to take it lightly. "We will rip you apart," a bench of Justices Hima Kohli and Ahsanuddin Amanullah said in an unusually stern reprimand.

The apex court observed that after notices to showcause were issued to them and they were directed to present themselves before it, Ramdev and Balkrishna "attempted to wriggle out" of the situation where personal presence was warranted. It is "most unacceptable", the court said.

The court fixed the matter for resumed hearing on 16 April.

It had also questioned the Centre's alleged inaction over Patanjali's claims about the efficacy of its products **PHOTO: ANI**

In two separate affidavits filed in the court, they tendered unqualified apologies for the "breach of the statement" recorded in the 21 November, 2023 order of the apex court.

In the order, the top court had noted that counsel representing Patanjali Ayurved had assured it that "henceforth there shall not be any violation of any law(s), especially relating to advertising or branding of products manufactured and marketed by it and, further, that no casual statements claiming medicinal efficacy or against any system of medicine will be released to the media in any form".

The top court had said Patanjali Ayurved Ltd is "bound down to such assurance".

Non-adherence to the specific assurance and subsequent media statements by the firm had irked the apex court, which later issued notice to them to show cause as to why contempt proceedings be not initiated against them.

The apex court is hearing a plea filed by the Indian Medical Association (IMA) alleging a smear campaign against the Covid vaccination drive and modern systems of medicine.

On 2 April, the top court had come down hard on Ramdev and Balkrishna and rejected their previous apology as "lip service".

It had also questioned the Centre's alleged inaction over Patanjali's claims about the efficacy of its products and for denigrating allopathy during the Covid peak and asked why the government chose to keep its "eyes shut".

—PTI

Delhi Metro need not pay ₹8K cr to Reliance unit: SC

NEW DELHI, 10 APRIL

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

In a major relief to Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC), Supreme Court on Wednesday set aside its own judgement and held that the PSU firm was not obliged to pay over Rs 8,000 crore to Delhi Airport Metro Express Private Ltd, a Reliance Infrastructure firm, in pursuance of a 2017 arbitral award.

Allowing the curative plea of DMRC against the 2021 judgement, a special bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud held that the top court erred in setting aside Delhi High Court verdict.

A division bench of the Delhi High Court, in 2019, had set aside the arbitral award passed against the DMRC.

The bench said the earlier SC verdicts in the case resulted in a "miscarriage of justice" and warranted it to exercise the curative jurisdiction.

The verdict said the amounts deposited by DMRC to date shall be refunded and restored the parties to their position in which they were on the date of pronouncement of Delhi High Court verdict. The 2017 arbitral award was to the tune of Rs 7,200 crore and the amount along with the interest and other charges swelled up to over Rs 8,000 crore. DMRC had filed the curative plea in August 2022 against the dismissal of its review plea in 2021.Anil Ambani-owned Reliance Infrastructure Limited, the flagship firm of DAMEPL had termed the curative plea of DMRC against the top court's decisions as the "whole-sale trial by ambush".

Earlier, the court had noted that the total amount of the award with interest till February 14, 2022 was Rs 8,009.38 crore. Of this, a sum of Rs 1,678.42 crore has been paid by the DMRC and an amount of Rs 6,330.96 crore is still due.

—PTI

'CAA unacceptable to Assam's indigenous population'

MARGHERITA, 10 APRIL

The indigenous people of Assam can "never accept" the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 (CAA), which will be a critical issue in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, asserted Dibrugarh Parliamentary constituency's Opposition candidate Lurinjyoti Gogoi.

The illegal influx of foreigners has been a long-standing cause for concern in Assam, and BJP has now legalised it with this act, which is unacceptable to the people, Gogoi said in an interview.

"Assam has borne the burden of illegal foreigners till 1971, and now, another 43 years till 2014 has been added to it," he said.

"How can the people accept this? There was a long-drawn agitation in the state against illegal influx and with the CAA, the identity of the Assamese is at stake," Gogoi claimed.

The United Opposition Forum Assam (UOFA) had

Lurinjyoti Gogoi **PHOTO: ANI**

announced Gogoi, the Assam Jatiya Parishad (AJP) president, as the candidate for the Dibrugarh Lok Sabha seat, from where Union minister Sarbananda Sonowal is contesting as a BJP nominee.

The Centre had in March implemented CAA notifying the rules four years after the law was passed by Parliament to fast-track citizenship for undocumented non-Muslim migrants from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan who came to India before 31 December, 2014.

The CAA is "completely motivated, communal and unconstitutional, and a ploy of BJP to burden Assam and its resources further," Gogoi alleged.

Opposition parties have been protesting against the CAA, and "this is a very serious and dangerous issue, which will also have an economic, social, cultural and linguistic impact on the people of the state," the AJP chief said.

The people of Assam are very concerned about it, and that will reflect in the ensuing polls, he said.

—PTI

BBC splits news operations in India

NEW DELHI, 10 APRIL

The BBC in India will separate in two from Wednesday, as it seeks to meet the country's foreign investment rules.

The BBC will retain its news-gathering team in India for its English language digital, television and radio outlets headquartered in London.

A new, independent, Indian-owned company called the Collective Newsroom will now produce content for the BBC's six other Indian language services.

The move comes a year after BBC India's offices were searched by authorities.

Those searches by income tax officials came weeks after the broadcaster aired a documentary in the UK - but not in India - critical of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

- Those searches by income tax officials came weeks after the broadcaster aired a documentary in the UK - but not in India - critical of Prime Minister Narendra Modi

BJP Spokesman Gaurav Bhatia, said at the time that the timing of the raids had nothing to do with the documentary, which the government attempted to block being shared in India.

When the BBC announced the formation of Collective Newsroom in December, it said the new entity would enable it to meet its commitment to audiences in India and globally, while also complying with Indian FDI law.

The Hindi service will now be produced by the Collective Newsroom, along with Marathi, Gujarati, Punjabi, Tamil, and Telugu - as well as a YouTube channel BBC News India in English.

But the Collective Newsroom - which was formed by four BBC staff members and will employ about 200 former BBC employees - will also be able to make content for other news providers across India and globally. The remaining 90 staff will still work directly for the broadcaster in news gathering operations for television, radio and online in English, reporting to editors in London. Their work will still be available to Indian audiences, although it will not be published in India.

—BBC News

SC says no to breathalyser test for voters

NEW DELHI, 10 APRIL

Supreme Court on Wednesday dismissed a plea seeking a breathalyser test of voters in the queue at every polling booth during the elections.

A bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta refused to interfere with Andhra Pradesh High Court order dismissing the petition and said, "It is more of a publicity interest litigation".

Counsel appearing for the Andhra Pradesh unit of the Janavahini Party said since the model code of conduct is imposed, no voter should be allowed to vote under the influence of alcohol.

The bench said, "What is this? It is for publicity. On polling day, it is dry day and police personnel are deployed everywhere. We will not entertain this. Dismissed."

High Court has said the petitioner has failed to draw its attention to any specific legal provision which would make it obligatory for Election Commission of India, to ensure that every person who enters a polling booth is subjected to a breathalyser test before a person is permitted to cast his/her vote.

The political party has challenged the inaction on the part of Election Commission on its representation dated January seeking the arrangement of a breathing analyser at the entry point of the queue being maintained at every polling booth and allowing only those voters to exercise their voting right, who are uninfluenced by alcohol.

It has sought direction to the poll panel to arrange a breathing analyser at the entry point of queues at polling booths and allow only those voters to exercise their voting right, who are uninfluenced by alcohol.

—PTI

Remove tattoos within 15 days: Odisha cops to SSB

BHUBANESWAR, 10 APRIL

Odisha Police have asked its Special Security Battalion (SSB) personnel to remove tattoos on their body within 15 days as these skin markings are easily noticeable with uniforms and considered "obscene and derogatory".

Deputy commissioner of police (security), Bhubaneswar issued an order to this effect on Tuesday and asked all officials concerned to prepare a list of SSB men having "easily noticeable tattoos" on their bodies.

SSB personnel provide security coverage to vital installations like the chief minister's residence, Raj Bhavan, state secretariat, Odisha Legislative Assembly and the High Court.

They also provide security to VVIPs and dignitaries within the state and those visiting Odisha from the rest of India.

All guards who are in charge of the SSB personnel have been directed to make a list of men "having tattoos on their body parts easily noticeable while wearing a uniform and ask them to permanently remove the tattoos within 15 days from the date of receiving the order".

DCP warned that if the order was not implemented, necessary departmental actions would be initiated against those who would not follow the directive. *—PTI*

Amid scarcity, 443 water tankers have been operating in the district as of 4 April **PHOTO: PTI**

Trouble for breweries in M'rashtra due to water woes

CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR, 10 APRIL

With parts of Marathwada region in Maharashtra facing water shortage due to inadequate rainfall, water supply to breweries in Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar district might be curtailed if necessary, an official said.

Nath Sagar reservoir supplies water to residential and industrial areas of Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar and neighbouring Jalna district.

Twelve companies are involved in making liquor and beer in Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar. In the 2023-24 financial year, these companies manufactured 761.53 lakh bulk litres of liquor and 3,778.28 bulk litres of beer, an excise official said.

They generated a revenue of Rs 5,455.70 crore for the state government, which was Rs 347.14 crore more than the previous year (2022-2023) year, the official said.

Amid scarcity, 443 water tankers have been operating in the district as of 4 April.

As of now, 269 villages and 48 hamlets are dependent on tanker water supply, a revenue official said.Asked about the water availability and its management, Collector Dilip Swami told reporters on Monday that making water available for drinking purpose was their priority.

"But if the water requirement of breweries in the city is more, then we can take a decision to curtail their supply," he said.

The collector was interacting with media people as part of the 'Samvad Setu' programme organised for discussions over the upcoming Lok Sabha polls in the district.

—PTI

Kerala Muslim leaders criticise 'The Kerala Story'

T'PURAM, 10 APRIL

The Muslim community in Kerala celebrated Eid-ul-Fitr with traditional fervour, marking the culmination of the one-month-long religious fasting.

Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan offered prayers at the famed Beemapally Masjid near here while Lok Sabha candidates Shashi Tharoor and Pannian Raveendran took part in the Eidgah held in Palayam Juma Masjid.

While addressing the faithful at the famed Palayam Juma Masjid here, Imam VP Suhaib Maulavi cautioned against attempts by vested interests to create division in society.

He said the screening of the controversial movie 'The Kerala Story' and the ongoing discussions revolving around it were part of such attempts.

During his sermon, prominent Islamic scholar Hussain Madavoor also criticised the Bollywood film saying that there is no love jihad in the country as claimed by the movie.Sudipto Sen-directed 'The Kerala Story', tells the story of a group of women from Kerala who were forced to convert to Islam and join ISIS. It was screened by public broadcaster Doordarshan last week, has been drawing sharp reactions cutting across politics in Kerala since its release.

The religious leaders came out against the movie days after the Idukki Diocese had screened it as part of an training programme for teenagers, which triggered a widespread row in Kerala. *—PTI*

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

INCLUDING 3RD TERM AT INCB

India elected to several key UN bodies

UNITED NATIONS, 10 APRIL

India has been elected to several key bodies at the United Nation (UN), including a significant victory by its nominee Jagjit Pavadia who was re-elected for a third term to the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) after garnering the highest number of votes.

Pavadia was re-elected to the INCB by secret ballot for the third term for five years from March 2025-2030, getting the highest number of votes in the highly competitive election.

India was also elected by acclamation to the Commission on the Status of Women for the term 2025-2029; Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund for the term 2025-2027; Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services for 2025-2027. It was also elected to the Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women for the 2025-2027 term and the Executive Board of the World Food Programme for the 2025-2027 term. "India remains steadfast in its commitment to actively engage in the discourse within these UN bodies, upholding the principle of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' — the world is one family," India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj said on X. India secured 41 votes out of the 53 voting members of the ECOSOC, the highest amongst all winning member states. With 41 votes, Pavadia secured a convincing win in the tough election with the candidate coming in second garnering 30 votes.

The election was highly competitive given that there were 24 candidates for five seats.

—PTI

The election was highly competitive given that there were 24 candidates for five seats **PHOTO: PTI**

Muslims offer namaz during Eid-ul-Fitr celebrations in Srinagar on Wednesday **PHOTO: PTI**

India rings in Eid-ul-Fitr with joy and fervour

India will usher in Eid-ul-Fitr on Thursday with joy and fervour.

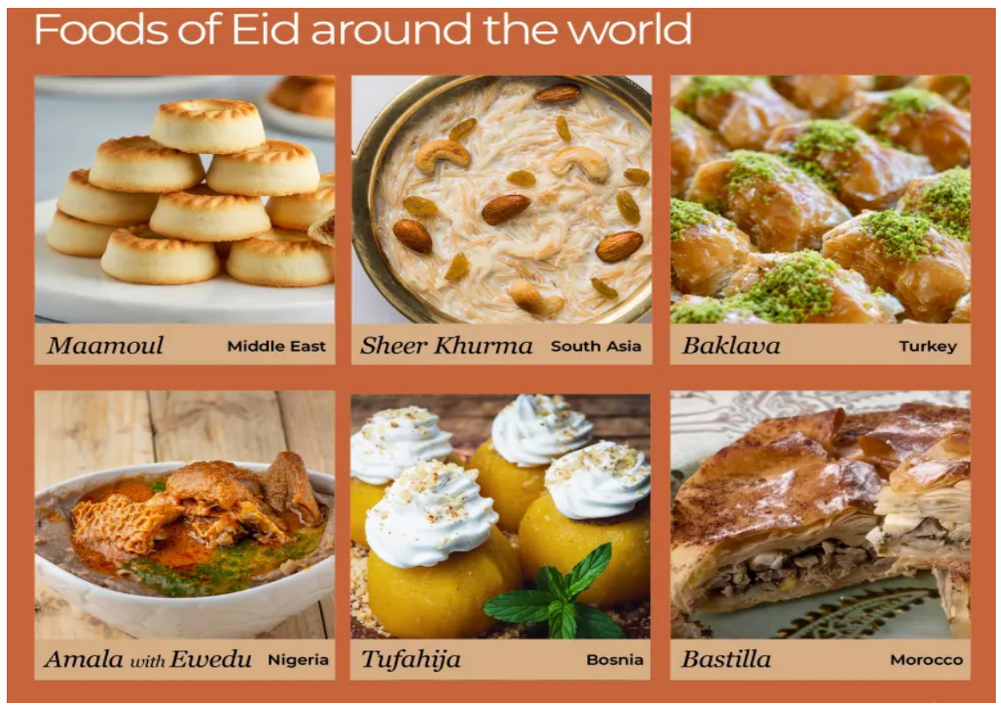
The first day of Eid-ul-Fitr is determined by the sighting of the crescent moon marking the start of the month of Shawwal, the 10th month of the Islamic (Hijri) calendar.

Lunar months last between 29 and 30 days so Muslims usually have to wait until the night before Eid to verify its date.

When the sighting has been verified, Eid is declared on television, radio stations and at mosques.

After the Ramadan month of fasting, Muslims celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr with feasts and family visits.

In the Islamic calendar, Ramadan is the ninth month and considered among the holiest months of the year. The month is a period of fasting and prayer. It is believed to be the month in which Muhammad, whom Muslims consider a Prophet, revealed the holy book — Quran — to Muslims. The word "Ramadan" itself is taken from the Arabic word, "ramad," an adjective describing something scorchingly dry or intensely heated by the sun.



How do Muslims celebrate Eid?

Traditionally, Eid is celebrated for three days as an official holiday in Muslim-majority countries. However, the number of holiday days varies by country.

Muslims begin Eid day celebrations by partaking in a prayer service that takes place shortly after dawn, followed by a short sermon.

On their way to the prayer, which is traditionally held in an open area, Muslims recite takbeerat, praising God by saying "Allahu Akbar", meaning "God is great".

It is customary to eat something sweet before the prayer, such as date-filled biscuits known as maamoul in the Middle East. This particular festival is known as the "sweet" Eid – and the distribution of sweets is common across the Muslim world.

Muslims usually spend the day visiting relatives and neighbours and accepting sweets as they move around from house to house.

Each country has traditional desserts and sweets that are prepared before Eid or on the morning of the first day.

Children, dressed in new clothes, are offered gifts and money to celebrate the joyous occasion.

Girls and women in many countries decorate their hands with henna. The celebration for Eid begins the night before as women gather in neighbourhoods and large family gatherings for the application of henna. In some countries, families visit graveyards to offer their respects to departed family members right after the morning prayers.

It is common for Muslim-majority countries to decorate their cities with lights and hold festivities to commemorate the end of the fasting month.

Muslim children celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr, at an Eidgah, in Jammu **PHOTO: PTI**

Eid amid the onslaught in Gaza

For some 2.3 million Palestinians in Gaza this Eid, this will be the first Muslim religious holiday after more than 33,000 people have been killed in Israeli attacks. With little food aid, and very limited water, Gaza's Eid al-Fitr will be mired in destruction amid the continuing attacks.

What are common Eid greetings?

The most popular greeting is "Eid Mubarak" (Blessed Eid) or "Eid sa'id" (Happy Eid). Eid greetings also vary depending on the country and language.

—Courtesy, Al Jazeera

LETTERS

write to us at salar@salar.news

SALAR سالار

1,500 sq km of land lost due to catastrophic soil erosion

A new study has revealed a worrying trend for India's soil health. Nearly 30 per cent of the country's landmass is experiencing "minor" soil erosion, while a critical 3 per cent faces "catastrophic" topsoil loss, according to the research.

The study, Geospatial modeling and mapping of soil erosion in India, for the first time, classified soil erosion on a pan-India basis.

Topsoil — the uppermost layer of soil — is vital for agriculture as it holds nutrients and moisture essential for plant growth. Erosion significantly reduces fertility and can lead to decreased crop yields.

Data accessed and quantified shows the northeastern state Assam lost close to 300 square kilometres or 31 per cent of its surface soil to "catastrophic" erosion.

So, what does it mean for the northeastern state as well as for India as a whole when it comes to soil erosion of that magnitude? According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, it could take up to 1,000 years to produce 2 to 3 centimetres of top or surface soil, which has a depth of 6 cm.

The study came up with six classifications for soil erosion — ranging from "minor" to "catastrophic" — in terms of soil eroded in tonnes over a hectare over a year.

So, a region would be classified as "catastrophic" if it reports over 100 tonnes of soil lost to erosion over a hectare during a year's time.

Apart from the Brahmaputra Valley, the lower reaches of the Himalayas are characterised by moraine or loose soil and highly unstable slopes. The region spans from the Kashmir Valley to the southern regions of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand and extends across the border into Nepal and parts of Odisha.

A new study has revealed a worrying trend for India's soil health **PHOTO: PTI**

This region stands as one of the most prominent erosion hotspots in the country, exacerbated by its susceptibility to seismic activity or earthquakes.

Odisha, which differs markedly from the Himalayas and the Brahmaputra valley in terms of topography and biodiversity, is also another hotspot for "catastrophic" erosion.

This erosion extends from the southern reaches of the Mahanadi river, traversing along the western borders of the state's lush green cover and natural forests, all the way to the northern parts of Andhra Pradesh. This underscores the significant soil degradation experienced by the forest cover in the region.

District-wise, the study highlighted that nine out of the 20 most susceptible districts to soil erosion in the country are located in Assam. Further, the national mean for soil in the country stood at 21 tonnes per hectare per year.

According to the study, this loss can be directly attributed to anthropogenic interventions like deforestation and rigorous farming practices over the years.

While there have been region-specific studies related to soil erosion, Saharia and his team wanted to have a holistic view of soil conservation for future planning of soil conservation.

The RUSLE equation — known as Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation — takes into account various factors like predicted crop loss, rainfall and runoffs, also known as the R-factor, soil erodibility, steepness and length of a slope of a mountain, crop management and support practices like strip cropping, etc., to estimate soil loss at 250 metre spatial resolution. *—Downtoearth*

It could take up to 1,000 years to produce 2 to 3 cm of top or surface soil **PHOTO: PIXABAY**

Hope in times of despair: 200 babies born in Manipur shelters

- Dispelling some of the darkness of 11 months of conflict and continuing uncertainty, Nganthoibi is one of the 200 babies born to displaced women who have taken shelter in different relief camps across the state. According to official estimates, at least 200 children were born in the six camps.

Cradling her baby born in a shelter for the displaced in Manipur, Hatneu says she has named her daughter Nganthoibi which aptly means shining light.

Dispelling some of the darkness of 11 months of conflict and continuing uncertainty, Nganthoibi is one of the 200 babies born to displaced women who have taken shelter in different relief camps across the state.

For the women like Hatneu, the last months have been unforgettable. Not just because their lives were upended when violence broke out in Manipur last year in May but because they welcomed their newborns.

"When I held my twins in my arms, all my miseries melted away," a 26-year-old woman at a relief camp in Kakching district said, requesting not to be identified or photographed.

Her twin boys are now four months old. "When they grow up, I will tell them these stories."

Hatneu, who found shelter at a camp in Churachandpur, the epicentre of the violence then, ran a bamboo goods shop in Imphal valley.

"I am a Kuki but I have always lived in the Valley only. We were forced to relocate here due to circumstances. Last month I gave birth to my baby at a nearby health facility. I have named my baby girl Nganthoibi, which means shining light," she said.

Hatneu said at least 15 babies have been born in her camp.

PTI visited six relief camps in the Meiti-dominated Imphal Valley and Kuki-zo dominated Churachandpur district. According to official estimates, at least 200 children were born in the six camps. Over 280 relief camps are operational across the state.

The hill state has witnessed sporadic, sometimes intense, ethnic clashes since 3 May last year between the majority Meitei community and Kukis, resulting in loss of over 200 lives. While Meiteis population is concentrated in Imphal city, Kukis have shifted to the hills.

The violence displaced thousands of people, with officials saying more than 50,000 people are living in camps following the unrest.

Ngahjemkim, who is also in a camp in Churachanpur, said she wants to remember this period for the gift she got in her baby. "Despite all odds, my daughter was born here and is healthy today. At a time when I thought none of us would survive... this seems like a miracle," she said.

Lu Lamva Ngahjemkim was eight months pregnant when the clashes broke out. She and her family landed at a relief camp in Churachandpur.

A month later, she gave birth to her daughter Christy who became the "silver lining in these grim times".

Nine-month-old Christy has now begun crawling and is a centre of attention at the relief camp.

A camp setup for pregnant woman in Imphal valley saw birth of 168 babies **PHOTO: PTI**

TH Anjali, living in a relief camp in Akampat, delivered her daughter in October.

"Whenever a couple wants to welcome a baby, they want it to happen at a time when they can provide well for it. But for us, it wasn't the same. Yes we are grateful for being alive but all that we had achieved in life so far is gone," Anjali said.

Among the women counting their blessings in form of their newborns at the relief camps are four who gave birth to twins.

A dedicated camp set up for pregnant women in Imphal valley saw the birth of 168 babies.

The facility, which was opened on 21 May last year, hosted 164 women, who were brought there from different relief camps around the state. The camp wound up in February when no pregnant women were found in the relief camps in the valley.

"Earlier, pregnant women were staying in the same camps as other women and it was felt they will not get the adequate space and care needed during the period. So a dedicated camp was set upwhere 168 children were born between May 2023 till February this year," said Manipur BJP president Sharda Devi who spearheaded the initiative.

"We allowed one person to stay with each pregnant or lactating woman to serve as an attendant while the rest of the family members stayed in other camps," she added.

As Manipur goes through a period of uncertainty, there is an anti-poll sentiment in the state among the displaced. But the elections for the two Lok Sabha seats in Manipur have been announced alongside the general elections. They will be held in Manipur in two phases on 19 and 26 April. While Inner Manipur and some segments of Outer Manipur will vote in the first phase on 19 April, the remaining segments of Outer Manipur will vote in Phase 2 on 26 April. *—PTI*

US imposes nat'l drinking water limits on chemicals

WASHINGTON, 9 APRIL

The Biden administration on Wednesday finalized strict limits on certain so-called "forever chemicals" in drinking water that will require utilities to reduce them to the lowest level they can be reliably measured. Officials say this will reduce exposure for 100 million people and help prevent thousands of illnesses, including cancers. The rule is the first national drinking water limit on toxic PFAS, or perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances, which are widespread and long lasting in the environment. Health advocates praised the Environmental Protection Agency for not backing away from tough limits the agency proposed last year. But water utilities took issue with the rule, saying treatment systems are expensive to install and that customers will end up paying more for water. *—AP*

Fire in Hong Kong building kills at least 5, injures 27

HONG KONG, 9 APRIL

A fire in a large, mostly residential building in Hong Kong on Wednesday morning killed at least five people and left another 27 injured. The blaze in the New Lucky House in the Jordan neighbourhood was extinguished later in the morning, but police said people inside the building still were calling for help. Firefighters had rushed to the scene after receiving a call about the fire at 7:53 am, authorities said. Three males and two females were killed, police said. Local media including the South China Morning Post reported the fire started at a gym on the first floor. The New Lucky House has 200 units and was built in 1964. Eric Chan, the Chief Secretary for Administration, said he was shocked and saddened by the blaze and told reporters there would be an investigation into the cause of the fire. *—AP*

PHOTO: X

Simon Harris becomes Ireland's new Prime Minister

DUBLIN, 10 APRIL

Simon Harris, 37, the youngest Prime Minister in Irish history, was chosen by the parliament on Monday to take over from Leo Varadkar, who stepped down unexpectedly last month. Harris's nomination was approved 88-69, having won the backing of the Green Party and Fianna Fail, two of his coalition's allies. Days after former PM Varadkar's shocking resignation, the 37-year-old former minister of health and higher education--best known for guiding Ireland's early response to the Covid-19 pandemic--was elected head of the centre-right Fine Gael party last month without facing any Opposition. *—ANI*

Kathmandu ranks top on list of worst AQI cities in world

KATHMANDU, 10 APRIL

Thin layer of polluted haze has shrouded the atmosphere of Kathmandu dipping the Air Quality of the Himalayan nation's capital, making it the city with worst AQI (Air Quality Index) in the world. Since the past few days, Kathmandu has continued to retain its position of most polluted city in the world. As per the reading by IQ Air, a Swiss group that collects real-time air-quality data around the globe, the particulate matter pollution (PM2.5) levels of Kathmandu at 8 am (local time) stood at 241 micrograms per cubic metre. It further climbed to 258 by 10 am (local time) with the start of office time in the national capital. Air pollution level of the bowl-shaped valley has accelerated further due to the rise in forest fires across the country. *—PTI*

Netanyahu's approach to war is a mistake: Biden

US President said it's deepening rift between the two allies

TEL AVIV, 10 APRIL

US President Joe Biden called Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's handling of the war in Gaza a mistake and called for his government to flood Gaza with aid, ramping up pressure on Israel to reach a cease-fire and widening a rift between the two staunch allies that has worsened as the war has dragged on.

Biden has been an outspoken supporter of Israel's war against Hamas since the militant group launched a deadly assault on 7 October. But in recent weeks his patience with Netanyahu has appeared to be waning and his administration has taken a more stern line with Israel, rattling the countries' decades-old alliance and deepening Israel's international isolation over the war.

Biden's most recent comments, made in an interview that aired late Tuesday after being recorded last week, highlight the differences between Israel and the US over humanitarian aid to people in Gaza, where a monthslong war has led to warnings of imminent famine.

Palestinians visit the graves of their relatives who were killed in the war between Israel and Hamas on first day of Eid al-Fitrt **PHOTO: PTI**

"What he's doing is a mistake. I don't agree with his approach," Biden told Spanish-language broadcaster Univision in an interview conducted on April 3, two days after the strike on the WCK convoy. He was responding to being asked if Netanyahu is prioritizing his political survival over the national interest. Biden said Israel should agree to a cease-fire, flood beleaguered Gaza with aid for the next six to eight weeks and allow other countries in the region to help distribute the aid. "It should be done now," he said. Other disagreements have also shaken the relationship in recent weeks of the war, including over Israel's plans for an offensive in the southernmost Gaza city of Rafah. Israel says that Rafah is Hamas' last major stronghold, but more than half of Gaza's 2.3 million people are currently seeking shelter there.

Biden was also outraged after an Israeli strike last week killed seven aid workers working for the food charity World Central Kitchen, most of them foreigners. His comments were made two days after that incident, which Israel said was unintentional. *—AP*

Iran vows retaliation against Israel for Gaza

TEHRAN, 10 APRIL

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei ***PHOTO: PTI***

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei reiterated on Wednesday a promise to retaliate against Israel over the killings of Iranian generals in Syria.

Khamenei spoke at a prayer ceremony celebrating the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, saying the airstrike that demolished Iran's consulate in Syria earlier this month was "wrongdoing" against a diplomatic post that is considered Iranian territory.

"When they attack our consulate section it looked like they attack on our territory," Khamenei said.

"The evil regime must be punished, and it will be punished." The strike killed 12 people: seven Iranian Revolutionary Guard members, four Syrians and a Hezbollah militia member.

Israel has not acknowledged its involvement, though it has been bracing for an Iranian response to the attack that was a significant escalation in their long-running shadow war.

State TV broadcast Khamenei's remarks live. He did not elaborate on the way Iran would retaliate.

Khamenei also criticised the West, particularly the US and Britain, for supporting Israel in its war against Hamas in Gaza.

"It was expected they (would) prevent (Israel) in this disaster. They did not. They did not fulfil their duties, the Western governments," he said.

"Western governments, in the past year's events, openly displayed the wicked nature of Western civilisation to the world," Khamenei said.

Iran supports anti-Israeli militant groups like Palestinian Hamas and Lebanese Hezbollah. It does not recognise Israel. *—AP*

EID-UL-FITR

An Indonesian youth lights a flare atop of a vehicle during the celebration of the eve of Eid-ul-Fitr holiday which marks the end of the holy fasting month of Ramadan in Jakarta, Indonesia **PHOTO: PTI**

S Korea's Prez faces a crucial referendum in Parl

SEOUL, 10 APRIL

South Koreans are voting for a new parliament, in what is widely seen as a midterm referendum on President Yoon Suk Yeol's administration.

Yoon still has three years left in office but his People Power Party (PPP) has struggled to achieve its agenda in a legislature dominated by the opposition Democratic Party (DPK). Polls have been mixed and neither major party has achieved a strong campaigning season.

Yoon is under pressure to address a number of issues including rising food prices, a rapidly aging population and an ongoing doctor's strike. In recent weeks, he's been criticised for appearing to be out of touch with voters' inflation woes. But the opposition has also faced similar criticism. If the PPP fails to secure a strong representation, Mr Yoon could leave office with little to show for his time, other than his foreign policy achievements.

His major success has been building up relations with Japan and the US to counter China and North Korea. But that will have little bearing on this election. South Koreans will be voting in line with their wallets more than anything.

A woman casts her vote for the parliamentary election at a polling station in Seoul, South Korea, Wednesday **PHOTO: PTI**

The President, whose approval rating has been falling for months, has also battled a series of political scandals since he was elected in March 2022. Just last month, Yoon drew flak for a visit to a Seoul grocery store where he commented that a bundle of green onions priced at 875 won ($0.65) was "reasonable" - when the item had been priced by the store at a discount due to subsidies. The item would have otherwise been typically priced between 3,000 won and 4,000 won. Yoon's comments sparked a backlash, with farmers organising sit-in protests with bundles of green onions. The vegetable also started to appear at the DPK's election rallies. *—BBC News*

Biden welcomes Japanese PM Khisida

WASHINGTON, 10 APRIL

US President Joe Biden has welcomed Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida at the White House as the two leaders seek to further boost bilateral ties amid shared concerns about China's increasing assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific region.

Biden and the First Lady Jill Biden have welcomed Kishida and his wife Yuko Kishida at the White House on Tuesday and treated them to a seafood dinner at a city restaurant.

Biden has invited the Japanese Prime Minister for a State Dinner on Wednesday as part of the efforts to strengthen ties with countries in the Indo-Pacific region.

President Biden last year hosted Prime Minister Narendra Modi for a State visit. "This (Kishida's) official state visit will build on the immense progress between our two nations that we've made towards creating a safer and more secure Indo-Pacific, as well as mutual prosperity for our peoples," US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said.

The Indo-Pacific is a biogeographic region, comprising the Indian Ocean and the western and central Pacific Ocean, including the South China Sea. The US, India and several other world powers have been talking about the need to ensure a free, open and thriving Indo-Pacific in the backdrop of China's rising military manoeuvring in the region, vital to global trade.

China claims nearly all of the disputed South China Sea, though Taiwan, the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia and Vietnam all claim parts of it. Beijing has built artificial islands and military installations in the South China Sea.

"Over the course of the visit, the president and the prime minister will highlight the high ambition of our alliance, in the defence and technology space but also across the board, deepening our partnerships on space, technology, economic investment, fighting climate change, coordinating global diplomacy, and strengthening our people to people ties," said Sullivan. *—PTI*

Pak continues to face acute water shortages

KARACHI, 10 APRIL

As residents continue to face acute water shortages in many parts of Karachi on the eve of Eid ul-Fitr, there is no sign of relief from the problem even during the three days of the festival, with water supply being suspended through water bowsers for the next two days.

The most-affected areas will be the salubrious parts of Karachi, including Defence Housing Authority and Clifton, where residents mainly depend on the supply of potable water through water bowsers.

People from almost every part of Karachi have complained that the Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation (KWSC) increased their miseries during Ramazan as they faced acute water shortages in their respective areas. However, a spokesman for the water utility said that KWSC had made special arrangements for the water supply and drainage of water in Karachi before and during Eid.

He said that water supply was impacted in some parts of Karachi due to mechanical activities. He further said that the supply had to be suspended for repair and maintenance work that caused water scarcity in some parts of Karachi. Speaking to Dawn, KWSC chief executive officer Syed Salahuddin Ahmed said that all pumping stations in the city were operating normally and 520 million gallons of water per day was being supplied to the city from Dhabeji Pumping Station. Rejecting KWSC official's claims, the residents said that water had not flowed through the main pipelines for the past several days in their areas, forcing them to opt for the mushrooming water tanker mafia to meet their daily requirements. *—ANI*

US TRANSFERS THOUSANDS OF SEIZED WEAPONS TO UKRAINE

WASHINGTON, 10 APRIL

US has transferred more than 5,000 AK-47s, rocket launchers and hundreds of thousands of rounds of ammunition seized from Iran to Ukraine as it tries to defend against Russia, the US Central Command has announced.

Ukraine has been facing severe shortages of weapons and munitions on the battlefield in its raging war against Russia, with the US unable to send more equipment from its stockpiles until more funding is approved by the much-divided Congress.

On 4 April, 2024, the US government transferred over 5,000 AK-47s, machine guns, sniper rifles, RPG-7s and over 500,000 rounds of 7.62mm ammunition to the Ukrainian armed forces, CENTCOM said. It said the material transferred to Ukraine is enough to equip one Ukrainian brigade — around 4,000 personnel — with small-arms rifles.

"These weapons will help Ukraine defend against Russia's invasion," CENTCOM said in a statement on Tuesday. The US government obtained ownership of these munitions on 1 December, 2023, through the Department of Justice's civil forfeiture claims against Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).

The munitions were originally seized by the US military and its partners "from four separate transiting stateless vessels between 22 May 2021 to 15 Feb 2023," the statement said. The US transferred over one million rounds of seized Iranian ammunition to the Ukrainian armed forces in October, CNN reported.

Over the past year, the US Navy has seized thousands of Iranian assault rifles and more than one million rounds of ammunition from vessels used by Iran to ship weapons to the Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen.

The seizures, frequently carried out with regional partner forces, target small stateless vessels on routes historically used to smuggle weapons to the Houthis. *—PTI*

TAIWAN DETECTS 10 CHINESE AIRCRAFT, 7 NAVAL VESSELS

TAIPEI, 10 APRIL

Taiwan's Ministry of National Defence (MND) has announced that it has detected ten Chinese military aircraft and seven naval vessels around Taiwan between 6 am on Tuesday and 6 am on Wednesday. Taiwan MND also tracked one Chinese balloon crossing the median line 115 km (62 NM) northwest of Keelung on Tuesday at 8:03 am (local time), Taiwan News reported.

According to Taiwan's Ministry of National Defence, of the 10 People's Liberation Army (PLA) aircraft, two crossed the Taiwan Strait median line and four entered the southwest corner of the country's air defence identification zone (ADIZ).

In response to Chinese activity, Taiwan sent aircraft, naval ships and deployed air defence missile systems to keep a track of Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) activity, according to Taiwan News report.

The Chinese balloon, which was detected crossing the median line 115 km (62 NM) northwest of Keelung at 8:03 am travelled northest and disappeared at 8:50 am (local time).

Taiwan's Ministry of National Defence stated, "10 PLA aircraft and 7 PLAN vessels operating around Taiwan were detected up until 6 am today. 6 of the aircraft crossed the median line of the Taiwan Strait and entered Taiwan's SW ADIZ. #ROCArmedForces have monitored the situation and employed appropriate forces to respond."

So far in April, Taiwan has detected Chinese military aircraft 57 times and naval vessels 57 times. *—ANI*

IN US

Indian student deaths: Diaspora urges action

WASHINGTON, 10 APRIL

A prominent Indian diaspora body has urged various agencies of the US government, universities and student associations to work towards addressing the spike in the deaths of Indian-origin students in the US in recent months.

An analysis of the Foundation for India and Indian Diaspora Studies (FIIDS) found the causes of these incidents range from suspicious shootings/kidnapping, environmental deaths due to lack of safety knowledge (monoxide poisoning, hypothermia), mental issues triggering suicides, and even suspicious accidents to violent crimes.

FIIDS found the causes of these incidents range from suspicious shootings/kidnapping and many more **PHOTO: X/INDIAN TOURISM**

FIIDS said authorities should enhance safety education, improve search and rescue procedures, implement stricter rules against fraternity ragging; increase awareness of risks and safety, and provide mental health support. Since the beginning of 2024, there have been at least half a dozen deaths of Indian and Indian-origin students in the US.

A 25-year-old Indian student who had been missing since last month was found dead in the US city of Cleveland this week. Last week, an Indian student in Ohio, Uma Satya Sai Gadde, died and police are investigating the case.

Last month, the Consulate posted on X about the death of Abhijeeth Paruchuru, a 20-year-old Indian student in Boston. Sameer Kamath, 23, Indian-American student at Purdue University, was found dead in a nature preserve in Indiana on 5 February.

On 2 February, Vivek Taneja, 41, Indian-origin IT executive, suffered life-threatening injuries during an assault outside a restaurant in Washington. In another tragedy, Vivek Saini, 25, Indian origin student was hammered to death by a homeless drug addict in Georgia. *—PTI*

Rupee rises 12p to close at 83.19 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 10 APRIL

The rupee appreciated 12 paise to close at 83.19 (provisional) against the US dollar on Wednesday, as equity benchmarks climbing to all-time high levels and a weak greenback against major currencies overseas boosted investor sentiment. Forex traders said the rising appetite for riskier assets supported the local currency. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.23 against the greenback. The unit hit an intraday high of 83.15. The domestic unit finally settled at 83.19 (provisional) against the dollar, 12 paise higher from its previous close. On Monday, the rupee settled flat at 83.31 against the US dollar. Forex and money markets were closed on Tuesday on account of 'Gudhipadwa'. *—PTI*

Gold scales record high as yellow metal hits Rs 72k

NEW DELHI, 10 APRIL

Gold and silver prices hit fresh lifetime high levels for the third straight session on Wednesday, with the yellow metal breaching Rs 72,000 per 10g level in the national capital, amid strong cues in the overseas markets, according to HDFC Securities. Gold prices rose Rs 160 to hit its lifetime high of Rs 72,000 per 10 grams in the national capital. It had settled at a record Rs 71,840 per 10g on Tuesday. Similarly, silver prices climbed Rs 200 to hit a record Rs 84,700 per kg. In the international markets, spot gold was trading at USD 2,356 per ounce, up USD 6 from the previous close. Gold prices extended gains in the European trading hours on Wednesday, Gandhi said. In addition, silver prices also marginally up at USD 28.10 per ounce. In the previous session, it had closed at USD 28.04 per ounce. In the futures trade on the MCX, gold bounced to an all-time high of Rs 71,709 per 10g in intra-day trade. *—PTI*

Maruti Suzuki eyes Bharat-NCAP safety ratings for cars

NEW DELHI, 10 APRIL

Maruti Suzuki has applied for Bharat New Car Assessment Programme (Bharat-NCAP) safety ratings for some of its vehicles, a senior government official has said.Last year, Tata Motors' SUVs Safari and Harrier became the first recipients of the safety rating for adult and child occupant protection as per Bharat-NCAP. The SUVs were given 5-star rating.In August last year, the government launched Bharat-NCAP, India's very own and independent safety performance evaluation protocol for automobiles. Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari had earlier said Bharat-NCAP is benchmarked to the best-in-class global standards and the system is designed to advance road safety and vehicle safety standards beyond mandatory regulations. The official also said the government is considering changing highway construction measurement method to 'lane km' from 'road km' in the current financial year as the government's focus has now shifted to building more expressways that are of at least four lanes. *—PTI*

Fitch downgrades outlook on China to negative

NEW YORK, 10 APRIL

Rating agency Fitch revised its outlook on China's sovereign credit rating to negative from stable, citing risks to the country's public finance outlook and amid a transition away from real estate sector-led growth. According to the rating agency, the outlook revision reflected increasing risks to China's public finance outlook as the country contends with more uncertain economic prospects amid a transition away from "property-reliant" growth to what the Chinese government views as a more sustainable growth model. Wide fiscal deficits government debt in recent years have eroded fiscal buffers, Fitch said *—PTI*

Sensex settles above 75,000 mark for first time

Nifty scaled a fresh lifetime high on gains energy, metal shares

Key indices hit intra-day lifetime high levels **PHOTO: AFP**

MUMBAI, 10 APRIL

Benchmark Sensex climbed 354 points to close above the record 75,000 mark for the first time while broader Nifty scaled a fresh lifetime high on Wednesday on gains in FMCG, energy and metal shares.

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 354.45 points or 0.47 per cent to settle at an all-time high of 75,038.15. During the day, the index spurted 421.44 points or 0.56 per cent to hit a high of 75,105.14. Broader Nifty of the NSE advanced by 111.05 points or 0.49 per cent to close at a record peak of 22,753.80. During the day, it jumped 132.95 points or 0.58 per cent to reach a lifetime intra-day peak of 22,775.70.

Key indices hit intra-day lifetime high levels on Tuesday with Sensex scaling the historic 75,000 mark for the first time but closed in the red following profit booking in index major Reliance Industries.

"Indian markets sustained their upward momentum, buoyed by a robust performance in the broader market, albeit slightly lagging behind its Asian and European counterparts," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services said. Investors' attention remains fixated on the release of the FOMC minutes and US inflation data later on Wednesday, Nair added.

- The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 354.45 points or 0.47 per cent to settle at an all-time high of 75,038.15. During the day, the index spurted 421.44 points or 0.56 per cent to hit a high of 75,105.14.Broader Nifty of the NSE advanced by 111.05 points or 0.49 per cent to close at a record peak of 22,753.80.

From the Sensex basket, ITC, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Bharti Airtel, State Bank of India, Asian Paints, Tech Mahindra, Reliance Industries and Nestle were the major gainers.

Maruti, HDFC Bank, Larsen & Toubro and Mahindra & Mahindra were among the laggards.

The majority of sectors were aligned with the move wherein FMCG, metal and energy were among the top gainers. The broader indices also edged higher after two days of pause and gained in the range of 0.7 -0.9 per cent, Ajit Mishra, SVP - Technical Research, Religare Broking Ltd said. In Asian markets, Tokyo and Shanghai settled lower while Hong Kong ended in the positive territory. Markets in South Korea were closed for elections.

European markets were trading in the green. Wall Street ended mostly with gains on Tuesday.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.18 per cent to USD 89.58 a barrel.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 593.20 crore on Tuesday, according to exchange data. *—PTI*

INDIAN STOCK MARKET EYES BULL RUN OF 1,00,000

NEW DELHI, 10 APRIL

India's stock market benchmark, Sensex, which has touched the 75,000 mark this week, has now set its eyes on 1,00,000 landmark.

According to Santosh Meena, Head of Research at Swastika Investmart Ltd, the Sensex now reaching 1,00,000 seems like a realistic possibility in the near future.

"Currently, India boasts the fastest-growing economy globally, with a promising future fueled by political stability. We appear to be in the midst of a major bull market, which is likely to persist for the next few years," Meena said.

At the same time, Meena advised investors that they should prioritise quality stocks while maintaining a long-term investment approach.

India's stock market has seen constant uptrend since its debut decades back, but the degree of uphill journey under the current government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in itself is a different story altogether.

To put it into context, Sensex, the stock market benchmark, was in hundreds back in 1981 and subsequently rose to 4,000 by end of the 20th century. Since 2000 and up until mid-2014, when BJP-government under Prime Minister Modi, it was around 25,000. And ever since 2014,

Sensex has never looked back since then, and now it has passed 75,000 mark.

Firm GDP growth forecasts, inflation at manageable levels, political stability at the central government level and signs that the central bank is done tightening its monetary policy have all contributed to painting a bright picture for the Indian economy, and it financial markets. *—ANI*

Paytm shares decline 4% after CEO quits

NEW DELHI, 10 APRIL

PHOTO: PTI

Shares of One97 Communications, Paytm's brand owner, on Wednesday declined 4 per cent after Paytm Payments Bank's Managing Director and CEO Surinder Chawla resigned from the company.

The stock dipped 4 per cent to Rs 388 on both the BSE and NSE.

The company's market valuation eroded Rs 463.84 crore during the morning trade.

Chawla's resignation comes amidst Paytm Payments Bank Ltd facing prohibitory action from banking regulator RBI.

Chawla joined PPBL in January last year after the payments bank received approval from the Reserve Bank of India.

In a major action against Paytm Payments Bank (PPBL), RBI, on January 31, directed it to stop accepting deposits or top-ups in any customer accounts, wallets, FASTags, and other instruments after 29 February. Subsequently, the deadline was extended to March 15.

The direction follows persistent non-compliance and continued material supervisory concerns, the central bank had said in a statement.

One97 Communications Limited (OCL) holds a 49 per cent stake in PPBL. *—PTI*

Lupin, Glenmark recall faulty drugs in US market

NEW DELHI, 10 APRIL

PHOTO: PTI

Leading generic drug makers Lupin, Glenmark, and Natco Pharma are recalling products in the American market for manufacturing issues, according to the US health regulator.

As per the latest Enforcement Report by the US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA), Lupin is recalling 26,352 bottles of Rifampin Capsules (300 mg), an antibiotic medication in the US market.

The affected lot has been produced by the drug firm at its Aurangabad-based facility and marketed in the American market by its Baltimore-based unit Lupin Pharmaceuticals, Inc.

As per the USFDA, the drug maker is recalling the lot for being "Subpotent".

USFDA stated that Glenmark is recalling 6,528 bottles of Diltiazem Hydrochloride extended-release capsules due to "Failed Dissolution Specifications".

The drug, used to treat high blood pressure, was marketed in the US market by New Jersey-based Glenmark Pharmaceuticals Inc., USA, a unit of the Mumbai-headquartered drug firm.

Hyderabad-based Natco Pharma is recalling 30 bottles of Lansoprazole delayed-release capsules, used to treat heartburn, in the American market, due to "CGMP Deviations", USFDA stated.

The product is manufactured by the company in its Kothur (Telangana) based formulation plant.

India is the largest supplier of generic medicines with around 20 per cent share in the global supply by manufacturing 60,000 different generic brands across 60 therapeutic categories.

The products manufactured in the country are shipped to over 200 countries around the globe, with Japan, Australia, West Europe and the US as the main destinations. *—PTI*

India iPhone output hits $14 B as Apple pivots from China

NEW DELHI, 10 APRIL

PHOTO: PTI

Apple assembled USD 14 billion worth of iPhones in India last financial year, doubling production in the country in what could be seen as a diversification in manufacturing beyond China, Bloomberg reported on Wednesday.

The Bloomberg news report quoted people familiar with the matter, declining to be named as the information isn't public, saying that the US tech giant now makes as much as 14 per cent or about one in seven of its devices from India.

The ramp-up in production suggests Apple is accelerating efforts to cut its longstanding reliance on China as geopolitical tensions mount, as per the report.

Manufacturing in India has lately taken pick up after the government production-linked incentives for over a dozen key sector.

In 2017, Apple started manufacturing iPhones in India. The Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme by the Central government is also likely to have attracted several gadget makers, including Apple, to set shop in the country. iPhone manufacturing in India was practically negligible 10 years ago. Apple is now manufacturing its latest iPhone versions in India.

The Central government offers a production-linked incentive (PLI) to boost domestic manufacturing and attract significant investments in mobile phone manufacturing and specified electronic components, including Assembly, Testing, Marking and Packaging (ATMP) units. *—ANI*

TIER-II MARKETS ATTRACT PLAYERS

Demand for retail space in malls dips 15%

NEW DELHI, 10 APRIL

PHOTO: PTI

Demand for retail spaces in shopping malls and high-street locations may decline up to 15 per cent this year from a record 71 lakh square feet in 2023 calendar year with retailers being cautiously optimistic, according to CBRE.

Leasing of retail spaces in shopping malls and high street locations rose 48 per cent to 71 lakh (7.1 million) square feet in 2023 across eight major cities as against 48 lakh (4.8 million) square feet during the 2022 calendar year.

In its report '2024 India Market Outlook', real estate consultant CBRE has projected that the leasing of retail space is expected to sustain between 6-6.5 million (60-65 lakh) square feet in 2024. It also expects a stable supply of retail spaces on completion of numerous high-quality mall developments.

Around 5-6 million (50-60 lakh) square feet of investment-grade mall space will become operational in tier-I cities, the consultant said.

While tier-I cities remain key expansion hubs, promising tier-II markets are attracting new players.

In 2024, among the retail categories, the home décor segment is likely to expand in online and offline formats, while fashion and apparel players will continue expanding in tier-I cities across malls and high streets.

Domestic jewellery brands are also expected to continue to expand. The growing interest of consumers in the entertainment category is likely to lead to more traction in leasing as well.

The report indicated that retailers, including anchor tenants and established brands, would be cautious with expansion plans. *—PTI*

Signature Global net debt up 6% to ₹1,160 cr

NEW DELHI, 10 APRIL

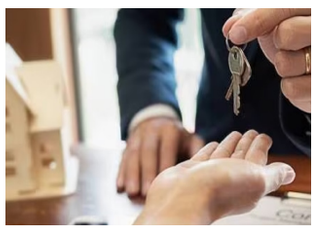


PHOTO: PTI

Realty firm Signature Global's net debt increased by 6 per cent last fiscal to Rs 1,160 crore due to land acquisitions for the development of housing projects.

According to the latest operational update, the company's net debt stood at Rs 1,160 crore at the end of 2023-24 fiscal, as compared to Rs 1,090 crore in FY23.

On Sunday, Signature Global reported that its sales bookings more than doubled to Rs 7,270 crore in 2023-24 from Rs 3,430 crore in the previous financial year.

In March, the company sold 1,008 luxury homes for around Rs 3,600 crore in its new project at Gurugram, Haryana, helping the company achieve record sales bookings during the last fiscal and beating the target of Rs 4,500 crore for 2023-24.

The company sold 4,619 units during the last fiscal, as against 4,512 units in 2022-23.

In terms of area, Signature Global sold 6.18 million (61.8 lakh) square feet in 2023-24, up from 4.35 million (43.5 lakh) square feet in the preceding years.

Sales realization for the 2023-24 averaged Rs 11,762 per square feet compared to Rs 7,886 per square feet in the previous fiscal.

The company, which got listed in September 2023 on stock exchanges, has been acquiring land outright and also partnering with landlords to develop projects in coming years.

In February, Signature Global entered into a Joint Development Agreement (JDA) with a landlord for the 20.32 acres of land in Gurugram, Haryana. The total development potential on this land is 28.4 lakh square feet of residential space with a potential revenue of Rs 4,500 crore. *—PTI*

BRIDGESTONE CLAIMS

'India fastest growing market, 25% growth expected in 2024'

NEW DELHI, 10 APRIL

The company on Wednesday launched its 'Turanza 6i' premium range of passenger vehicle tyres **PHOTO: PTI**

Japanese tyre major Bridgestone expects to clock 25 per cent growth in revenue between 2024 and 2026 in India, which is its fastest-growing market globally, according to senior company officials.

The company, which on Wednesday launched its 'Turanza 6i' premium range of passenger vehicle tyres developed specifically for the Indian market, will be increasing its tyre production to 40,000 per day in the next four to five years from the current 30,000 per day.

Bridgestone India Managing Director Hiroshi Yoshizane said Bridgestone is already a leader in the aftermarket segment of passenger vehicle tyres in India with around 20 per cent share and the company's goal is to strengthen its position further.

When asked about the growth outlook in India, Bridgestone India Chief Commercial Officer Rajarshi Moitra said,"Last year (2023) our revenue growth was 9 per cent and over a period between 2024 to 2026 we expect to grow our revenue by 25 per cent overall." Bridgestone India does not publicly share its revenue numbers. Moitra said this year the market has declined in the January-March quarter.

"But our estimation is that the market will grow back to the tune of 4.5-5 per cent in the second half of the year," he added.

On the company's investments and capacity enhancement plans, Yoshizane said as part of the USD 300 million long term investments "for manufacturing expansion and capability enhancement" announced for India in 2017, Bridgstone had last year said it would invest Rs 600 crore on capacity expansion.

Asked about the company's plans to tap the growing electric vehicle PV segment in India, Yoshizane said Bridgestone's new 'Turanza 6i' is an EV-ready premium product range, although not necessarily specific for electric passenger vehicles only. The product has been developed keeping in mind the Indian conditions. "An EV when compared to the conventional one is heavier and has motor tractions and is more silent. So the tyre equipped with an EV should help in delivering a longer mileage, battery efficiency, durability to sustain the vehicle and silence," he said. *—PTI*

NET PROVIDERS MUST REVEAL FEES ON FCC 'NUTRITION' LABEL

NEW YORK, 10 APRIL

Much like nutritional labels on food products, "broadband labels" for internet packages will soon tell you just what is going into the pricing of your service, thanks to new rules adopted by the Federal Communications Commission this week.

"If you've ever shopped for home or mobile internet, you can understand how hard it can be to understand what you're actually paying for," said Jon Donenberg, Deputy Director of the White House National Economic Council, on a call with reporters. "The broadband nutrition label is a tool that can help consumers make sure they have a clear, straightforward explanation of home and mobile services before signing up for anything."

Following the design of FDA food labels, these broadband labels will provide easy-to-understand, accurate information about the cost and performance of high-speed internet service to help consumers avoid junk fees, price hikes, and other unexpected costs. Internet service providers selling home access or mobile broadband plans will be required to have a label for each plan beginning 10 April. *—PTI*

1ST LEG OF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE QF

Madrid and City draw 3-3 at Bernabeu

First 3 goals came in the opening 14 minutes

MADRID, 10 APRIL

Real Madrid and Manchester City drew 3-3 in a frantic first leg of the quarterfinals of the Champions League on Tuesday, with the first three goals coming in the opening 14 minutes before the rivals exchanged blows again in the second half.

Federico Valverde scored a 79th-minute equalizer for Madrid after City had rallied with Phil Foden and Josko Gvardiol scoring goals five minutes apart midway through the second half at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium.

Bernardo Silva had put City ahead two minutes into the match, but Madrid rallied with an own-goal by City defender Rúben Dias in the 12th and a score by forward Rodrygo in the 14th. Rodrygo put Madrid ahead after breaking through the City defence to get to a pass by Brazil teammate Vinícius Júnior in front of the area. Foden evened the match again with a superb shot into the top corner in the 66th, then five minutes later Gvardiol put the visitors ahead again with a powerful strike into the far corner. Valverde's equalizer came with a neat low volley from inside the area. The result extended Madrid's 28-match unbeaten streak in all competitions, as well as City's 26-match unbeaten run across all tournaments.

Madrid eliminated City in the semifinals in 2022, while City got the best of Madrid at the same stage last year.

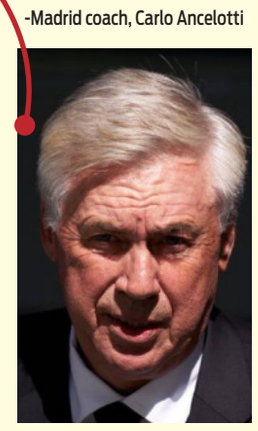
City had to cope with the last-minute absence of playmaker Kevin de Bruyne, the Belgian international who was ill and had to be dropped from the starting lineup. De Bruyne vomited after the team arrived at the Bernabeu. The second leg will be next Wednesday in Manchester. —*AP*

City players celebrate after Gvardiol scores **PHOTOS: X/@MAN CITY**

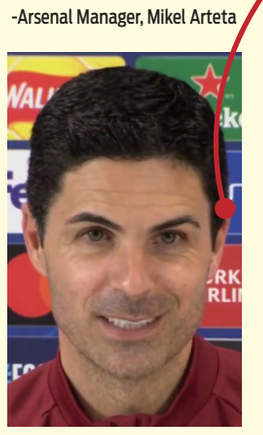
	Real Madrid	Man City
POSSESSION	38%	62%
SHOTS	14	12
SHOTS ON TARGET	5	6
CORNERS	4	2
FOULS	11	9

Vini Jr, Rodrigo celebrates **PHOTOS: X/@RM CF**

> We wanted to take at least a small advantage, but in the end we are satisfied because we competed well and gave our best
>
> -Madrid coach, Carlo Ancelotti



> In the Champions League you cannot give anything to the opponent. We have given them two goals today
>
> -Arsenal Manager, Mikel Arteta



Arsenal rescues 2-2 draw with Bayern

Harry Kane scores against old rival

LONDON, 10 APRIL

Harry Kane got his customary goal against Arsenal on his return to north London, but Bayern Munich couldn't leave with the win this time.

Leandro Trossard's second-half equaliser rescued a 2-2 draw for Arsenal against Bayern in the first leg of Champions League quarterfinals Tuesday after Kane had scored against his old rival yet again.

Trossard rolled in a low shot in the 76th minute to cancel out Kane's first-half penalty and leave the teams evenly balanced ahead of next week's second leg.

The hosts had taken a 12th-minute lead through Bukayo Saka and dominated the early stages until Serge Gnabry made it 1-1 in the 18th. Kane then put Bayern ahead from the penalty spot in the 25th, but two of Arsenal's substitutes combined for the equalizer as Gabriel Jesus teed up Trossard in the area.

The last time these two teams played, Bayern routed Arsenal 10-2 on aggregate after two 5-1 wins in the round of 16 in 2017.

Kingsley Coman nearly scored a 90th-minute winner for Bayern, but his flick-on from close range hit the post.

The opening goal came when Ben White teed up Saka inside the area and the England winger rolled a low shot between two defenders and inside the far post, out of reach of the diving Manuel Neuer.

Soon after, a sloppy Arsenal mistake led to the equaliser. Gabriel turned the ball over in midfield to give Bayern a quick counter, and Leon Goretzka slipped the ball through for Gnabry to slide in and slot the ball past goalkeeper David Raya.

Bayern was then awarded the penalty when William Saliba tripped Leroy Sane in the box, and Kane — who was greeted by a chorus of boos every time he touched the ball — sent Raya the wrong way before rolling the ball into the right corner. —*AP*

Leandro Trossard celebrates after scoring a stunner **PHOTOS: X/ARSENAL**

	Arsenal	Bayern Munich
POSSESSION	59%	41%
SHOTS	13	8
SHOTS ON TARGET	4	2
CORNERS	2	1
FOULS	13	12

Kane celebrates after scoring goals **PHOTO: X**

McIlroy to complete career Grand Slam at Masters

AUGUSTA, 10 APRIL

Rory McIlroy made that familiar turn off Washington Road and onto Magnolia Lane a year ago, the one that seems to suck in those fortunate enough to make it back in time, and felt as certain as ever that it was his time to win the Masters. After all, McIlroy had been playing well. His confidence was soaring. He had a belief in himself that was more than just a hunch. More like a premonition. Yet by Friday afternoon, when storms would fell three towering Georgia pines and cause the second round to push into the weekend, all those positive vibes had disappeared. —*AP*

World of Warcraft to return to China

BEIJING, 10 APRIL

Popular games such as World of Warcraft will be back in China this summer, according to Chinese video games giant NetEase. Last year, NetEase and game developer Activision Blizzard ended their 14-year partnership due to disagreement over intellectual property control. The break-up sparked outcry with millions of Chinese internet users complaining that they would lose access to their favourite games. —*BBC News*

Olympics: Athletics offers $50K prize to gold medalists

MONACO, 10 APRIL

In a first for an Olympic sport, gold-medallists in 48 athletics events of this year's Paris Games will be awarded USD 50,000 by World Athletics, which will widen the spectrum by giving prize money to all three medal winners at the 2028 Los Angeles edition. India is hoping for a gold medal in Paris from reigning Olympic champion Neeraj Chopra, who finished on top in the Tokyo Games. He became the first Indian track and field athlete and second overall in individual sports to win a gold in the Olympic Games. —*PTI*

Gukesh downs Abasov to jump into joint lead with Nepomniachtchi

TORONTO, 10 APRIL

Grandmaster D Gukesh grabbed a share of the lead alongside Russia's Ian Nepomniachtchi by becoming the only Indian to post a win in the fifth round of the FIDE Candidates Chess Tournament, outwitting Azerbaijan's Nijat Abasov in a hard-fought contest here. With nine rounds still to come in the double round-robin event, Gukesh and Nepomniachtchi share the top spot with 3.5 points and they are followed by top-seeded American Fabio Caruana half a point behind.

American Hikaru Nakamura was the other winner on the day against Firouza Alireza of France while Indian teen R Praggnanandhaa played out a draw with overnight sole leader Nepomniachtchi. Vidit Gujrathi also put an end to his losses by settling for a draw with Caruana. Praggnanandhaa and Nakamura share the fourth spot with 2.5 points followed closely by Gujrathi on two points. Alireza and Abasov share the last position on 1.5 points apiece. In the Women's competition, nothing changed in terms of standings with all the four games ending in draws.

Praggnanandhaa's sister R Vaishali could not dent the defenses of Anna Muzychuk and Koneru Humpy recovered with a draw against Aleksandra Goryachkina of Russia. Tournament leader Zhongyi Tan of China was held to a draw by the continuously improving Nurgyul Salimova of Bulgaria and Russian Kateryna Lagno signed peace with Tingjie Lei of China. —*PTI*

PHOTO: X@AIRNEWSALERTS

Desperate times for RCB as they take on struggling MI

MUMBAI, 10 APRIL

Desperate Royal Challengers Bengaluru will be under tremendous pressure to get their act together against an equally struggling Mumbai Indians when the two teams face-off in an Indian Premier League match here on Thursday.

Four losses in five matches have not only vindicated how poor RCB were in the last IPL auction, but they have also missed the opportunity to make it up with better on-field showing. However, there is nothing much to separate the two teams as RCB are just a rung below MI in the points table at the ninth position with MI winning just one (29-run victory over Delhi Capitals) out of their four games so far.

Virat Kohli's brilliance, notwithstanding, RCB's campaign is under threat of falling apart even before they could register enough wins to have a real shot at the knockouts. With the halfway mark of the ongoing IPL approaching rapidly, it is imperative for RCB's overseas stars, including skipper Faf du Plessis (109 runs), Glenn Maxwell (32) and Cameron Green (68) to find form. —*PTI*

Rohit Sharma with Cameron Green, Mohammed Siraj and Karan Sharma during a practice session in Mumbai on Wednesday **PHOTO: PTI**

TODAY'S MATCH

RCB vs MUMBAI INDIANS

Time: 7.30 pm
Where To Watch: Jio Cinema, Star Sports Network

Stadium: Wankhede Stadium, Mumbai

Samon, Parag power Rajasthan Royals to 196/3

JAIPUR, 10 APRIL

Riyan Parag and Sanju Samson continued their red hot form in the IPL as their aggressive fifties pushed Rajasthan Royals to 196 for three against Gujarat Titans on Wednesday.

At 43 for two in the powerplay, Titans had it all under control before skipper Samson (68 not out off 38) and Parag (76 off 48) combined to snatch the momentum from the visitors. Royals smashed as many as 123 runs in the last 10 overs.

Parag, who has taken his game to the next level and is thriving in his new batting position of number 4, was at his disdainful best on way to his third half-century in five innings. The 22-year-old hammered five sixes with three of them coming against left-arm spinner Noor Ahmed via the sweep shot.

Parag brought up his fifty with a flat six over long-on off pacer Mohit Sharma. Samson, on the other hand, started with back-to-back fours off Umesh Yadav before taking a backseat to watch Parag go about his business. In the penultimate over, Parag pulled a bouncer off Mohit over mid-wicket for another maximum. His opening partner Jos Buttler went for an expansive drive off Rashid in the sixth over but ended up getting caught at first slip. —*PTI*

BADMINTON ASIA C'SHIPS

Lakshya loses to Qi, bows out in 1st round

NINGBO, 10 APRIL

Star Indian shuttler Lakshya Sen bowed in the opening round of men's singles at the Badminton Asia Championships after suffering a straight-game loss to local favourite and top seed Shi Yu Qi here on Wednesday.

World Championships bronze medallist Sen gave a good account of himself and fought tooth and nail but the higher-ranked Chinese eventually proved to be too strong as the Indian lost 19-21 15-21 in the gruelling opener that lasted 53 minutes.

It was also curtains for the Panda sisters -- Rutuparna and Swetaparna -- in the opening round of women's doubles, losing 8-21 13-21 against seventh seeds Zhang Shu Xian and Zheng Yu W of China.

Sen showcased brilliant court coverage and indulged the Chinese in long rallies before picking up points with his smashes and inch-perfect drop shots to lead 11-7 at the change of ends.

Sen kept his nose ahead till 14 points even as Qi started to claw back into the contest, tiring out Sen with long rallies and then finishing the points with cross-court smashes.

Sen didn't give up and dived deep to save a point and then brought the equation down to 11-12.

But then unforced errors started to creep into the Indian's game. He lost steam and conceded easy points as Qi regained control and ran away with the second game. —*PTI*

Lakshya Sen knocked out in 1st Round at the Badminton Asia Championships **PHOTO: ANI**

Inter Miami & Monterrey to play Concacaf QF

MONTERREY, 10 APRIL

Lionel Messi and Inter Miami will try to overturn a 2-1 deficit from the first leg when they play Monterrey on Wednesday night for a spot in the CONCACAF Champions Cup semifinals.

Messi missed last week's first leg of the home-and-home, total-goals series. The eight-time Ballon d'Or winner returned from a hamstring injury that had sidelined him since a 13 March Champions Cup match against Nashville to play the second half of last Saturday's Major League Soccer game at Colorado, scoring once in a 2-2 draw.

The match sold out in just a few hours and asking prices for resale tickets ranged from $450-$1,900.

Miami took a lead last week on Tomás Avilés' 19th-minute goal, but Monterrey went ahead when Maximiliano Meza scored in the 69th and Jorge Rodríguez in the 89th.

Because CONCACAF uses away goals as a tiebreaker, a 1-0 Miami win wouldn't be sufficient.

"We are Monterrey. We are at home, with our people. Let Messi worry about us," Ortiz said. "It's very fortunate to be able to face the best player in the world. We are going to enjoy it, but we want to win." —*PTI*